

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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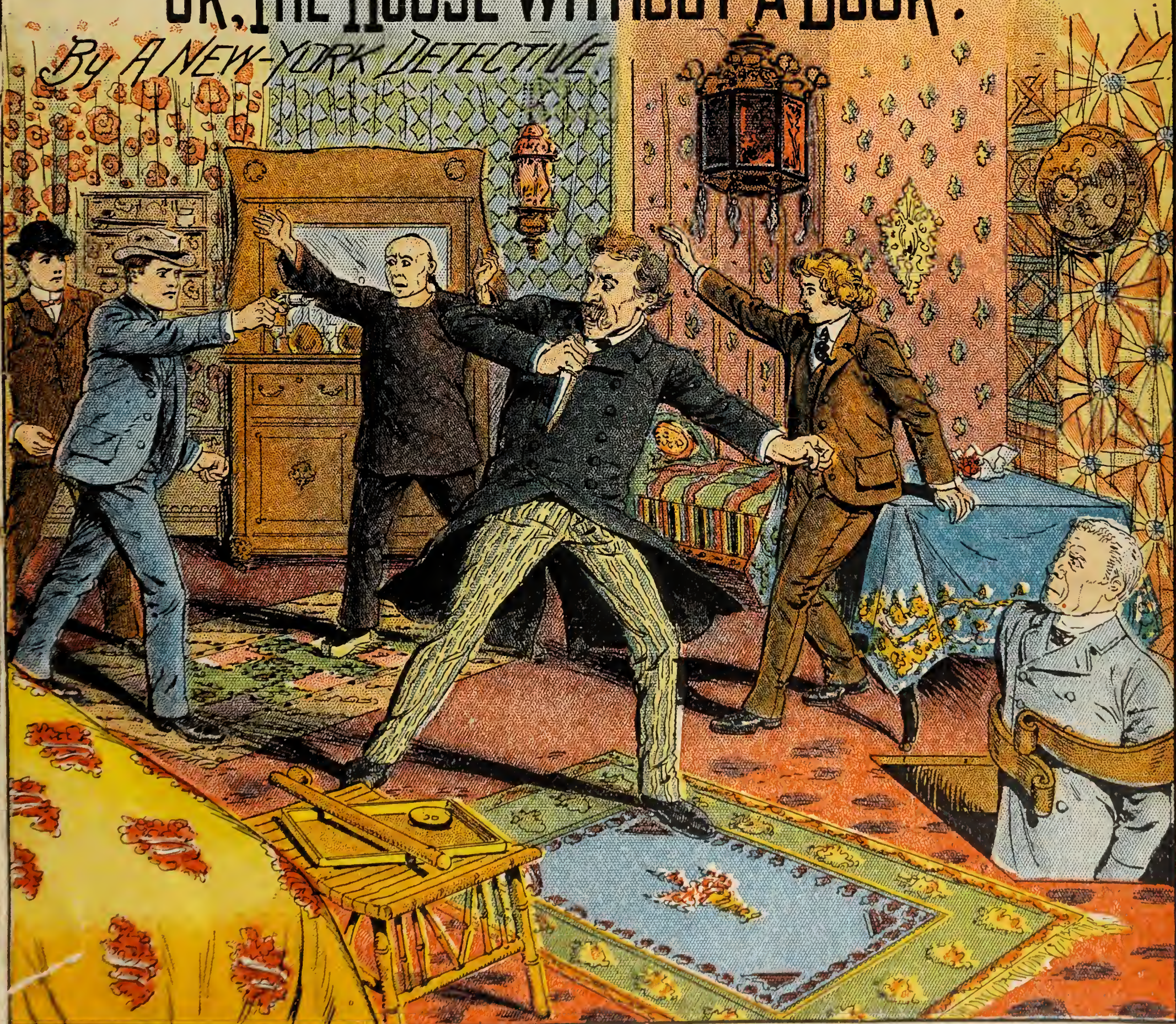
NEW YORK, DECEMBER 19, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS IN BAXTER STREET;

OR, THE HOUSE WITHOUT A DOOR.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



"What I say goes!" cried Diamond Dave, flourishing the knife above Old King Brady. "This is your finish, old man!" "No, yours!" echoed a voice behind him. The door flew back and Young King Brady and Jack Welby, with drawn revolvers, dashed into the room.

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No. 204.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 19, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

The Bradys in Baxter Street;

OR,

The House Without a Door.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

A JOHN STREET MYSTERY.

"Mr. Brady! Mr. Brady! Come here to the window a moment, quick!"

Young King Brady, the protege and partner of the world-famous detective, stood at the window of the little office in the old building on Park Row, New York City, so long occupied by these noted detectives.

The short November day had already drawn nearly to a close.

The electric lights made it almost brighter than it had been before the sun went down on that day of fog and darkness.

This is the time of day when thousands upon thousands are working their way to Brooklyn and the Bronx.

Strangers in lower New York at midday can have no conception of this crowd.

Thousands are jostled about the entrance to Brooklyn Bridge.

The evening crowd was surging through the street now, as Young King Brady looked out of the window.

In the midst was a well dressed man, wild and distraught in appearance, fighting his way across the street.

His hat had been jammed down over one eye and his collar had burst and stuck out on the left of his neck like a wing.

In some way his coat had been torn half off his back, also.

He was evidently a stranger, though of what nationality, it was difficult to tell, seen as the Bradys saw him then.

He was gesticulating excitedly and striking out right and left.

Some of those around him laughed and pulled away to avoid contact with the man.

Others, more quarrelsome, struck back and pushed the man about.

"Drunk or crazy," said Young King Brady as the old detective looked over his shoulder.

"He may be crazy, Harry. He certainly is not drunk. He is laboring under some great excitement, that is plain.

For a moment the Bradys watched.

Then a policeman pushed in amongst the crowd, seized the man by the arm and led him away.

"It is my opinion," said Old King Brady as he adjusted his old fashioned stock and buttoned up the long, blue coat that he wore, "it is my opinion, Harry, that the man has met with some great mental shock which has temporarily turned his brain."

"Shouldn't wonder," replied Young King Brady. "Governor, are you going home?"

"Yes, I thought I would. There will be nothing more doing to-day."

Old King Brady put on the famous broad-brimmed white hat and tilted it back on his head. "Business has been quite quiet of late," he went on to say. "It would

almost seem as if all the crooks and criminals had emigrated, but to-morrow, I think ——"

"Hold on!" broke in Harry, "there is some one coming upstairs."

"Two persons," said Old King Brady, "and it is my opinion they are coming here."

"What makes you say it?"

"I can tell by the way one of them walks that he is greatly excited, and that the other one, more cautious, is holding him back."

"Governor, you are a great reader of minds."

"No more than you will be if you keep on learning as you have been doing lately. But time, now! Here they are!"

"Great Scott!" muttered Young King Brady as the door opened. "It's the madman we saw on Park Row."

It was the excited individual whom the Bradys had seen hustled about in the crowd, sure enough.

He was still in charge of the policeman, whom the Bradys knew well.

"Mr. Brady, here's a gent what was looking for youse," said the officer. "I think that he is daffy. I will leave him in your charge. If you decide to send him to the loonytic asylum, all the young fellow needs to do is to run down stairs and call me. I'll fix the rest."

The man was sputtering and panting too hard to resent this as he would undoubtedly have done, if the look that he gave the policeman meant anything at all.

"Sit down, sir," said Old King Brady, taking him by the arm and leading him to a chair. "Calm yourself. You are perfectly safe here."

"Yes, yes! You are Old King Brady!" gasped the man panting like a tired dog.

"I am Old King Brady. Try and regain your self-possession and tell us what the matter is."

"It must be done quick," said the man with a most peculiar foreign accent which we shall not attempt to imitate.

"All right, sir, it shall be done quick," replied the old detective soothingly.

"You are wanted in John street right away."

"John Street! Very good. Harry, call a cab and be quick about it, my boy."

Young King Brady hustled out of the office.

The man looked ruefully at his torn coat.

He tried to fasten his flying collar but the button-hole had burst.

"Try a pin," said Old King Brady.

The pin was tried with trembling hand, and proved successful.

"My name is Van Kolken," said the man pantingly. "Here is my card."

The card read:

MINTO & VAN KOLKEN.

Importers of Diamonds and Precious Stones,
No. — John St. New York.

Up in one corner were the names of the partners:

Dirk Van Kolken.

Michael Minto.

"A diamond robbery," thought Old King Brady, "and a big one, I'll bet."

"I ran all the way from John street," said Mr. Van Kolken. "It seemed as if everything was against me. A drunken man pushed me into the gutter. I slipped and fell at the corner of Ann street. Then the crowd began to jostle me; it is a shame."

"The Brooklyn crowd is easily excited," said Old King Brady. "It is a bad time for a man to be in a hurry when they are about."

"Yes, yes, but you see I wanted you right away. I said: 'Send for the Bradys,' as soon as it happened. Yes, that is what I said. Minto couldn't leave the place so I came."

"Why not telephone?" ventured Old King Brady, pointing to the instrument.

"I tried it. The girl said you were busy."

"Those telephone girls are a nuisance. I haven't had a call in an hour—no, not since three o'clock."

By this time Mr. Van Kolken had, in a measure, recovered his breath.

"Can you tell me for what we are wanted?" Old King Brady asked.

"It is a matter of diamonds and other gems. You saw in the paper that we had purchased the collection of the late Prince Martigny, and had imported it for Mr. Huntoon-Brasher, on Fifth Avenue. The price paid was \$250,000. This we owe for the most part and have yet to collect our money. We are ruined if the package cannot be found."

"Probably it can be," said Old King Brady. "Diamonds and gems are the easiest of all stolen goods to recover. They cannot be offered for sale without attracting immediate attention. It is not as though you could melt them up."

"It relieves my mind to hear you say so, Mr. Brady."

"I do not say so to relieve your mind, but because it is so. Tell me all about it, please."

"It must be kept a deep secret, Mr. Brady. That is why I came to you instead of going to the police. The public must not know."

"Everything confided to us is held in perfect confidence, Mr. Van Kolken."

"I believe you. This case is so simple."

"Sometimes these very simple cases are the most difficult ones to handle; but go on."

"We had the jewels all done up in a package. Mr. Brady, I was to take them to Mr. Huntoon-Brasher's house personally so, that there could be no mistake. There were other packages ready to go out by express. The wagons were down stairs on John street, as they always are at this time of night. By some strange mistake, our foot clerk carried the Huntoon-Brasher package down stairs and gave it to one of the drivers and now it is forever lost."

"But why?" demanded Old King Brady. "What can be easier than to get back this package from the express company?"

"Ah, my dear sir, there is where the trouble comes in. It was the Adams Express wagon, as the clerk thought, but when I went down stairs to see if the wagon was still there, it was another of the Adams Express. The driver declared that he had just come and that he knew nothing about the package, and that no other Adams Express wagon had been there all the afternoon."

"Ah! Here is the point in the story," exclaimed Old King Brady. "Did you prove that?"

"I did. I went at once to the Broadway office of the Express Company, and they said that it was so."

"But the receipt?"

"Jack Welby, our clerk, declares that he gave the receipt to my partner, Mr. Minto, but he did not."

"Then Mr. Welby must be in the steal."

"That is what we think, but we cannot have him arrested, and I do not want him to know that we suspect him. It would utterly ruin us to have this affair get into the papers. I have telephoned to Mr. Huntoon-Brasher that the gems are still detained in the Custom House. He will rest quiet for a day or two. Mr. Brady, they must be found. We would rather sacrifice all our profit on the transaction than to have this affair come out. What will you charge?"

"That, sir, we will determine later. Do you wish us to undertake the case?"

"Yes, yes! Certainly we do."

"Very good. The cab will soon be here and we will start at once for John street. Meanwhile, a word about this Jack Welby. Has he been with you long?"

"A year or more."

"What do you pay him?"

"Fifteen dollars a week."

"His age?"

"About nineteen."

"Is he a young man of good habits?"

"I know nothing about him."

"You pay him fifteen dollars a week and entrust him with diamonds worth half a million or so, and know nothing of his private character at all?"

"Such is the case."

"Mr. Van Kolken, you deserve to be robbed."

"I—I suppose it is a mistake."

"Mistake! Sir, it is that sort of mistake which causes half the defalcations and petty thievery in business circles; but it is my business to find these gems, not to instruct you as to how to run your place."

"Say what you like, do what you like, charge what you like; only get the Martigny gems back again!" cried the jeweller.

Just at this juncture Young King Brady opened the door and announced the cab.

CHAPTER II.

JACK WELBY.

The Bradys and Mr. Van Kolken jumped into the cab and were driven to John street.

On the way the old detective explained to Young King Brady the nature of the case.

Arrived at their destination, they found Mr. Minto a short, stolid man with little foxy eyes half hidden beneath bushy brows, and a face about as expressive as a block of wood.

He was excited over the robbery but not nearly as much as his partner.

"It is de express company; dey are all frauds," he kept saying over and over again.

"Dey ought to be made to sweat for it. Dey send out de fake wagon demselves."

"The wagon had 'Adams Express' painted on the sides, so Jack says," added Mr. Van Kolken; "but can Jack be believed?"

This conversation took place in the private office of the firm from which the two or three clerks employed by the firm were, of course, excluded. Jack Welby among the rest.

"How do I know?" replied the jeweller shrugging his shoulders. "He vas always a good boy until now."

"You are sure he did not give you the receipt?"

"Vell, of course."

"Were there many customers in at this time? Was there much confusion?"

"About de same as usual at dat time of day," was the rather gruff reply.

Mr. Minto appeared to be of a particularly hoggish disposition.

It was hard for Old King Brady to hold his patience. The senior partner was just the sort of man that he did not like.

Van Kolken seemed to read his thoughts.

"There was confusion," he said. "Our shipments were unusually heavy to-day. There were many packages on the counter and besides that there were three customers in talking about goods."

"That is more to the point," said Old King Brady.

"Vat difference it all make?" demanded Minto. "I've got de receipt, den I no lose it. What then?"

"I must have the details of this business, sir, if you expect me to work up the case," said Old King Brady, sternly. "It is not for your interest to hold back the facts."

Mr. Minto changed his tune at once.

He became almost cringing.

He assured Old King Brady that nothing should be held back.

Then he went over the ground in detail.

His story was practically the same as that Mr. Van Kolken had told.

"We are losing time," said Mr. Minto as Old King Brady listened in silence, and Harry took notes without uttering a word. "Why you not tell us vat to do?"

"I will tell you what to do when the right time comes, sir," said Old King Brady. "You appear to be in a great hurry. I do not care for the case unless I am to be allowed to work it in my own way."

Old King Brady was angry and he showed it. The partners talked together in some foreign language for a minute.

What it was neither of the detectives could make out.

"It is all right, Mr. Brady," said Van Kolken as Minto turned to his desk and began to write. "You are an Irishman. You Irishmen are so quick tempered. We want you and no one else. You deal with me and all will be right."

"Just so," said Old King Brady. "I am an Irishman and I am proud of it. What kind of a man are you?"

"Sir, I am a mixture. My father was a Dutchman and my mother was a Russian. I was born in Constantinople, you see."

"All this is nothing to the purpose. I will undertake this case on condition that it shall be put absolutely in my hands to manage exactly as I please."

"It shall be so, Mr. Brady, I give you my word on that."

"Very good. Call in young Welby. Harry, be very careful with those notes."

Arthur Welby was a good looking young chap of about nineteen years.

He had light hair, which he wore parted in the middle, watery, blue eyes, and a freckled face with a decidedly honest appearance. He came into the office with a quick step.

Old King Brady did not fail to notice, that although very much scared, the boy did not fail to look him straight in the eye.

"Sit down, Jack," said the detective. "Take it easy. I suppose you know who I am?"

"Old King Brady, the detective. I have seen you many a time, sir. You used to come into our place when I was with Nussbaum & Gunner in Maiden Lane."

"Ah! You were there?"

"Yes. You had a diamond case for them. I was the office boy at the time."

"So? I think I remember you. We recovered those diamonds in twenty-four hours. I hope we may be equally successful here."

"I hope so, I am sure. It is a bad job for me if you don't get them."

"Tell me now, Jack, how came you to take that package to the express wagon?"

Mr. Minto was writing furiously. He did not look around.

"I am going to tell you it exactly as it happened, sir. There was a package to go to Cleveland by the Adams.

It was just the same shape and size as the missing package. I did it up myself, and ——"

"Pardon me a minute. Did you tie up the missing package?"

"No, sir."

"Who did?"

"Mr. Minto."

"Go on."

"Well, Mr. Brady, I laid my package down on my desk so as to keep an eye on it. Then I was called off to put back some trays in the safe while Mr. Eisner, the head salesman, was waiting on a customer, that being the rule here, that the trays must not be left on the counter and that the salesman must not turn around to put them in the safe."

"I understand," said Old King Brady. "What next?"

"Why, I heard someone call 'Adams' down stairs. That's the way the expressmen do, you know. They won't come up. We have got to go down."

"Yes, I know. Well?"

"I took the package, and without looking at the address, hurried down stairs."

"And the wagon stood at the curb in the usual way?"

"Yes."

"You knew the driver?"

"No; he was a new man to me. I handed him the package, he wrote the receipt and tossing the package in the back of the wagon, drove right away."

"Did not that strike you as being strange?"

"Well, it did. I remember wondering if we were the only ones shipping by Adams, but there was something else I might have noticed and did not, which certainly was strange."

"What was that?"

"There was only one fellow in the wagon, and there ought to have been two."

"There are always two to these jewelry express wagons?"

"Always two."

"And you are certain that there was only one on this wagon?"

"I only saw one."

"Go on."

"Well, sir, I took the receipt and brought it upstairs and gave it to Mr. Minto. That is all."

Old King Brady expected a sharp denial from Mr. Minto when these words were spoken, but none came.

The fat jeweller laid down his pen, wheeled around in his chair and sat looking at them all, but never spoke a word.

"Did you read the receipt and see what it called for?" asked Old King Brady.

"No, I did not," replied Jack Welby, "and there is where I made my mistake, of course."

"Are you not in the habit of reading your receipts from the express company?"

"It ought to be done, of course, but I had a lot to do

and was in a hurry to get back to the office and I never looked at it."

"And how do you know which package you took off your desk? Did you not look at the address on that?"

"No. I had written the address myself, and I took it for granted that it was the Cleveland package."

"You found the Cleveland package afterward in the office?"

"Yes."

"And the other one was missing?"

"Yes."

"Where was the Cleveland package when you discovered it?"

"In the safe in a compartment where we keep our most valuable packages until the moment of shipping."

"And the Huntoon-Brasher package which should have been there, was not?"

"That is it."

"Then somebody must have changed the position of the packages while you were busy putting away the trays?"

"It looks so."

"Do you suspect anyone? Speak freely, young man."

"No, sir. Anyone in the office might have done it, for the safe being behind the counter, stood open all the time."

"I see, and that is all you know?"

"Absolutely all."

"And now it is my turn," broke in Mr. Minto. "I want to say ——"

"Wait one moment," said Old King Brady. "Harry, step out in the hall with me, please. Gentlemen, I will be with you in a moment."

The Bradys left the office. Messrs. Minto and Van Kolken watching them depart with a disgusted look.

As soon as they were safely in the hall, Old King Brady in a whisper that was hardly audible, said:

"Harry, it is of the highest importance that we should know all about that young man. I'll give you half an hour to get ready, during which time I shall hold him, for this must be your work. Get close to him. Find out who he is and all about him. I will try and be at the office to-morrow morning. If not, you will have to take your chances of catching me. You understand?"

"Yes, Governor. And I will watch that Minto, I suppose?"

"Ha! You don't like that man?"

"I do not."

"Never trust appearance in a case like this."

"It is a deep laid plot, Governor."

"Not a doubt of it. Still, it may have all been worked outside of the office. Although I think that it appears to be just the other way. Now, be off with you, and on no account permit the boy to get out of your sight from the time that he passes out of this door tonight until the time he enters it to-morrow morning."

Old King Brady then returned to the private office.

He had set for his assistant a difficult task.

To keep Jack Welby in sight all night involved putting

in the next twelve or fourteen hours wherever the boy chose to spend them and only the boy himself could tell where that might be.

CHAPTER III.

OLD KING BRADY DRIVES A CAB.

"Now, Mr. Minto," said the detective, resuming his seat in the private office, "I am ready to hear whatever you may have to say."

"Where is your partner?" demanded the jeweller. "Does he not come back?"

"No, he has gone."

"Gone!"

"Yes. We have other cases besides this one on hand. He has business to attend to. I can easily work this alone."

"Huh! I thought you both was going to work mit this case. You scharge less for von than two?"

"Never mind about that. If my bill is not satisfactory you need not pay it. Now, what have you to say?"

"I say dis. I never had the receipt."

"And I say that I put it in your hand, Mr. Minto," said Jack Welby positively.

He was very pale, but he looked determined.

Old King Brady was much impressed by the honest look in his eyes.

"Perhaps there is some mistake," he said. "Jack, where was Mr. Minto when you handed him the receipt?"

"He stood at the end of the counter near the door of the office, talking with Mr. Portinger."

"Who is Mr. Portinger?"

"He is a friend of mine," put in Minto. "He called to see me on private business. He has nothing at all to do mit de case."

"Except to tell whether or not he saw this young man hand you the receipt. Has he been asked that question?"

"He has not. He vent right away den. He knows nothing about it at all."

"What is his address? I can ask him the question."

"I don't know his address."

"But you can find it out?"

"Ven he comes again, yes."

"What business is this gentleman in?"

Minto looked at Van Kolken.

"Oh, tell the gentleman," said the partner, "we must keep nothing back."

"Vell, Mr. Portinger, he sells diamonds on commission."

"Oh, I see! Hangs around the hotels?"

"Yes."

"Passes under another name, of course?"

"He is known as Count Zucca. He may be at any hotel. He goes from one to another. I cannot tell."

"I see. Well, to get back to business, you have made a search for the receipt?"

"Yes."

"It is not to be found?"

"No."

"Now, about the changing of the two packages, the one taken off Jack Welby's desk and put in the safe and the other taken from the safe and put on his desk; this is the very keynote of the whole business. Have you any idea how it came about?"

"Yes, I have," said Minto, sullenly.

"Give me your view, please."

"I think he did it."

"I did not do it, Mr. Minto," said the boy in a clear, firm voice.

The jeweller shrugged his shoulders and said nothing.

"If you think that I am guilty, why don't you tell this man to arrest me?" flashed Jack. "I don't want to be under suspicion. I would rather go to prison and have the case rifled to the bottom, I ——"

"There, there, Jack! No one suspects you!" put in Van Kolken. "I told you that before."

"Then why does he keep hinting," cried Jack. "I won't stand for it. If you think that it is up to me, say so and I will go to the police and tell them ——"

"Tell dem vhat?" broke in Minto. "Tell dem vhat?"

"Tell them to lock me up and put their detectives on the case. I won't run away. I want my good name to be cleared."

"Settle all that between yourselves," said Old King Brady, rising. "I am through with Jack Welby. I want to talk to Mr. Eisner and anyone else who was in the office at the time that this affair occurred."

The half hour had expired.

Old King Brady knew that his faithful assistant was shadowing the door down stairs.

He did not care what Jack Welby did.

Mr. Eisner and the other clerks were called in and questioned after Jack Welby went out of the office. Their answers shed no light on the mystery.

"Now, gentleman, I shall leave you," said the detective. "Expect news by to-morrow night."

"You see the hand of some well known crook in this case?" demanded Mr. Van Kolken.

"I think it was the work of a wagon man," the detective replied.

"And vat might a wagon man be?" added Minto.

"A man who robs with the help of a wagon,"

"Ah, well, we know the package went off by a wagon!"

"Yes," said the detective, "and now it is up to me to see what more I can find out about the case. Good day, gentlemen. Expect to hear from me as I said."

Old King Brady then left the office.

As he passed up John street he saw a neatly dressed young man standing in a doorway on the opposite side of the street.

He looked as unlike Young King Brady as possible, yet the old detective knew him at a glance.

The Bradys exchanged secret signs as they passed, but, further than that, they paid no attention to each other.

Each had his man to follow and it was no part of the programme to know each other now.

At the corner Old King Brady disappeared for a moment in a hallway.

Harry, who was watching, saw him again a few minutes later.

No one would have known the old detective then.

He looked a cross between a broken down actor and a frayed panhandler.

Harry saw him take up his position in a doorway on the opposite side of the street.

That was about the last he did see of him.

In a few minutes Jack Welby came out and Harry had his hands full.

Old King Brady watched him as he shadowed the jewellery clerk up the street.

"That boy will make a great detective some of these days," he said to himself. "He is constantly improving, and——Hello! What is this?"

A cab had driven up to the door in the building in which the offices of Minto and Van Kolken were located.

Old King Brady glided across the sidewalk and accosted the driver, at the same time showing his shield.

"Probably you don't know me, but I am a police detective in disguise," he said. "Tell me who this cab is for."

"It is for a Dutchman upstairs," replied the driver. "I don't know his name."

"You have been called here before?"

"Never."

"Who called you now?"

"A young lad. My stand is near the City Hall Park."

Old King Brady described Welby, and the cab driver assured him that the description fitted that of the young man who had called the cab.

"This is for one of the partners," he said to himself. "There can hardly be any doubt of it. This is a chance not to be overlooked."

Aloud, he said to the cabby:

"Look here, I want to borrow your cab. The man who sent for you is the man that I am shadowing. I shall take the best of care of it and I shall give you two hundred dollars deposit, and fifty stays with you for the use of the cab."

"I don't know about that, boss. I am afraid."

"You need not be. Wait. Here comes an officer. We will ask him."

A policeman was approaching.

He was a man whom Old King Brady knew well.

He called him and whispered a few words.

"It's all right," said the policeman to the driver. "This is Old King Brady, the detective. You must have heard of him."

The cab driver had heard of Old King Brady the detective, of course.

He got down off his box and Old King Brady got up.

A few minutes later Mr. Minto came down stairs and got into the cab.

"Drive me to No ——— Baxter street and be quick about it," he said.

If he had instructed the detective to drive him to the moon, Old King Brady could hardly have been more surprised.

Baxter street is one of the worst streets in all New York.

From one end to the other it is filled with the lowest grade of people.

Here many desperate criminals of the rougher sort make their home.

Of late years many large tenements have sprung up between the old tumble down house in Baxter street.

These swarm with Italians, Chinese and foreigners of other nationalities.

There are people enough on one block in Baxter street to start a good sized town.

What business Mr. Minto would have in such a place, Old King Brady found it hard to imagine, but he opened the door of the cab, and closing it after the diamond dealer sprang upon the box and drove away.

The number given was pretty well up toward Canal street.

Old King Brady soon drew up in front of an old rookery which stood partly below the grade of the street.

There was a saloon on the ground floor, and in order to get to it, one had to go down six steps.

This was owing to the raising of the grade of the street, of course, but it gave the place a most peculiar look.

The house itself had a high, peaked roof with little round windows up at the top.

In the dirty, low, window were old fly-specked bottles, a stuffed fox with a moth-eaten tail, and a horrible looking owl with half of its feathers missing and minus one of its glass eyes.

Over the door was the sign:

"B. BOCCHICHI,

"Pure Wines and Liquors.."

It looked just the place where one would be certain to get the very worst to drink.

Mr. Minto sprang out of the cab.

"You will have to wait for me here about half an hour," he said. "I will pay for your time."

He then descended the steps and entered the saloon.

It is not a neighborhood where one would make any enquiries of casual people.

As long as the detective stuck to his post, no one was likely to disturb him.

Once let him begin to question people, though, and he might consider himself lucky if they did not pull him from the box and make away with the cab.

Old King Brady waited and watched.

Few persons entered the grimy door of the saloon.

The detective understood what that meant, well enough.

Mr. B. Bocchichi evidently did but little business with his neighbors.

The place was simply a resort for crooks.

A full hour passed.

Still, Old King Brady remained there, chilled to the marrow by the raw November atmosphere.

The street noises were beginning to be maddening.

In one tenement two men were engaged in a fierce quarrel, and their loud, shrill voices, spluttering away in some foreign tongue, grated harshly on the detective's ear.

In another house some one was playing on an accordeon.

The instrument was old and wheezy and would have been bad enough in any case, but this fiend kept drawing out the same tune over and over again, until the only relief the detective could get was to keep tabs on the number of times it was played.

At last, when his patience was almost exhausted, the door of the saloon was opened and a wicked looking man almost as black as a negro, and with bushy hair and stubbly black whiskers looked out.

"Come and getta the boss," the man cried.

Was Minto drunk inside?

Old King Brady determined not to go in.

This might be just a plot.

It was quite possible that Minto had penetrated his disguise and was disposed to make trouble.

Old King Brady shook his head.

A black scowl spread over the fellow's face.

He came up the steps, crossed the sidewalk and approached the cab.

"You coma geta him!" he said. "He vera drunk now."

"Bring him out," cried Old King Brady. "I am not going to leave my cab."

"Vera well," said the man, "I open de door?"

"Yes."

The door was opened and the man hurried back down the steps.

In a minute he reappeared with two others.

Between them they carried Mr. Minto, who was certainly in a bad way.

His florid face was deathly white and his tongue hung out of his mouth.

He appeared to be entirely unconscious when they put him in the cab and slammed the door.

"A case of knockout drops," said Old King Brady. "More than likely this man has been robbed."

There was nothing to be done about it then, however.

To have said a word would have only brought a crowd about and more than likely he would be pulled from the box and knocked out himself.

"I'll have that place pulled before I am half an hour older," thought the detective. "I shan't forget any of your faces, my friends."

"Where do I take him to?" he asked of the man with the beard.

"How do I know?" the man replied with a shrug of his shoulders.

Then all three hurried down the steps and disappeared within the saloon while Old King Brady drove the cab rapidly up Baxter street to Prince, where he went on into Mulberry street, rounding up at the headquarters of the New York police.

CHAPTER IV.

YOUNG KING BRADY WORKS UP HIS MAN.

Harry had to wait a good half hour for the boy Jack Welby to appear.

He came down stairs at last and walked with a swinging gait toward Broadway.

It was easy shadowing.

The boy seemed to be lost in thought and it was only necessary to look at his face to see that he was greatly troubled.

He walked up Park Row and in by the bridge, and there happened one of those unfortunate occurrences which are going on at that crowded spot almost every night.

Fortunate for the young detective, but unfortunate for Jack Welby.

The jewelry clerk was not bound for Brooklyn and he tried to force his way through the crowd which was foreing in at the bridge entrance.

Probably he pushed against somebody.

All in an instant a big man turned and struck him, and the boy went down in the midst of the crowd of struggling humanity.

Young King Brady, who had been as close behind him as possible, for here was the greatest danger of losing his man, jumped to the rescue.

"Keep back! Keep back! Do you want to trample him to death?" he shouted.

He seized Welby's arm and lifted him to his feet.

The crowd surged about them.

It was all that Harry could do to drag the poor fellow through the mass of people, and it was all that Jack could do to walk, too. Harry had to almost carry him to a neighboring saloon where he sank down groaning upon a chair.

"Are you much hurt?" asked Young King Brady, kindly. "Your head is badly cut! That fellow was a perfect brute to strike you so. I only wish that I could have got one crack at him."

"It's my leg," groaned Jack. "It's broken, I think. It doubled up under me when I fell."

"That's very unfortunate. Still, I don't think that your leg is actually broken. You could not have walked even the short distance you did if it had been. It is only badly strained."

"I am sure I don't know what I shall do. This puts me in an awful fix."

Jack Welby groaned and looked greatly distressed.

Young King Brady saw at a glance that there was some-

thing more than the twisted leg preying upon his mind. "This is my chance," he thought. "Nothing could have worked better. I shall surely know all about him before I get through with this."

"Can I help you any?" he asked. "My name is Sam Parker. I am a stranger in New York, and as I don't happen to have anything to do just now, I have plenty of time on my hands."

It was just the first thing that came into Young King Brady's head.

The words seemed to strike Jack forcibly. He gave the detective a peculiar look.

"Does he suspect me?" thought Young King Brady. "Perhaps. I must take great care."

"My name is Welby—Jack Welby," said the jeweller's clerk, "you might help me a whole lot if ——"

"Well, I am ready. Do you want a doctor?"

"No, no! I have no money to pay a doctor. I think with you the leg is not broken. It is only very badly strained. A good rubbing would set it right."

"That can be easily had."

"I don't see how you can do it here."

"What's the matter with taking a room in the hotel across the street. We can get a bottle of arnica in the drug store, and I can give you a good rubbing there."

"But I don't know you."

"I think that you can trust me. Look at my face."

"You look straight. That's right, but a fellow don't know who to trust these days. Besides I haven't any money of any account."

"Well, I have."

"You look it, if you will allow me to say so."

"You can't always judge by looks. I have just come in from the West. You needn't be afraid of me, Jack. I started in to help you and now I am going to see you through."

"By thunder, you could help me a lot if you would," said Jack with intense earnestness. "Come ahead. I'll pay you up some time."

"You won't regret it. Can you stand?"

"Yes, I guess so. I am awful lame, though."

"We will get you on the bed first, and then I will go out and buy the arnica. Are you in a hurry?"

"No, not at all. I have a very important engagement later in the evening that I must keep, but I am in no hurry just now."

"You shall keep it. I shall have you all fixed up by that time."

Young King Brady helped him out of the saloon.

He invited him to take a little whiskey in case he should feel faint, but Jack positively declined.

"No, no! I never touch the stuff," he said. "I've seen enough of what it will do for a man."

They crossed the street to the hotel opposite.

"My friend has been knocked down in the bridge crowd and has strained his leg," said Young King Brady. "We want a room where I can give it a good rubbing. Please

send one of the porters for a bottle of arnica. You can take it out of that and bring me the change."

Young King Brady threw down a five dollar bill.

The clerk was all attention then.

A porter appeared and helped him get Jack up to a room for there was no elevator in that ancient house.

Soon the arnica came, and Harry, helping Jack to undress, gave the leg a thorough rubbing.

The effect was all that he had hoped for.

When he had finished Jack declared that he felt as well as ever.

The head wound proved to be but a slight affair.

"It is awfully kind of you, Parker," he said. "I don't know what I should ever have done without you. It is most essential that I should be all right to-night. More so than you can possibly know."

"You will be before I get through with you," replied Harry. "You are under no obligations to me at all. I've got nothing to do tonight. Hello! What's this?"

It was a knock on the door.

Harry opened it and a waiter appeared carrying a small table.

"Put it there," said Young King Brady, pointing toward the side of the bed.

"What's that for?" asked Jack.

The waiter grinned and retired.

In a moment he returned with a tray loaded down with all sorts of good things to eat.

There was a fine steak, eggs, vegetables and desert.

"What on earth are you trying to do with me? Do you want to kill me?" cried Jack.

"On the contrary, I want to put you on your feet," laughed Young King Brady. "I was just going for my dinner when I struck you. Under the circumstances, I thought you wouldn't mind having dinner with me."

"You are too good," said Jack after the waiter retreated. "I'll tell you a secret, Sam."

"Out with it," replied Young King Brady, and he said to himself:

"I've got him now. Was there ever such a piece of luck?"

"What is your secret?" he asked. "Out with it. You do not need to be afraid to trust me."

Jack laughed.

"My secret is that unless I had struck you there would have been no supper coming my way tonight."

"No? Are you so close run as all that?"

"I am not flush just now and that's a fact."

"Out of business?"

"No; but I shall be soon, I expect. No, it isn't that. I have had to use up my money."

"It comes hard on a young fellow who has to give up all he makes for others' support."

"Well, it isn't that, either. I haven't a soul in the world depending upon me for support."

"Oh, I don't mean to be curious about your affairs."

"That's all right. This steak is a Jim Dandy, but say you are not eating anything yourself."

Having dined as late as four o'clock, he was not a bit hungry, but he had to make a martyr of himself and eat.

"I am getting there," he said to himself. "It comes slow, but it comes. He'll tell me all he knows pretty soon."

Jack, who sat on the edge of the bed, still half undressed, ate like a starving man.

"Doesn't look much as if he had stolen \$250,000 worth of diamonds," Harry thought.

Jack finished his supper, eating like a man half starved.

He dressed himself then, and declared that nothing remained of his leg trouble but a little pain and stiffness about the knee.

"I don't know how I shall ever repay you for this, Parker," he said.

"Don't bother your head about that," replied Harry. "Between you and me, I have got lots of money, more than I know what to do with. You can't always judge Westerners by our clothes."

Young King Brady would have played poor just as quick if he had been put to it, but as it was, things seemed to work out the other way.

"What part of the West did you come from?" asked Jack.

"New Mexico last," replied Harry, adding:

"Say, perhaps you could help me a bit, too, if you will."

"You bet I will if I can," replied Jack.

"I want to buy a fine diamond. Could you put me on an honest firm?"

"I don't know whether I could or not, but I can help you buy the diamond all right. I am in the business. They say that I am something of a judge of diamonds myself."

"The deuce! Then you are the very fellow that I wanted to know. I am in the market for a hummer and I will pay a good price."

"I'll see to-morrow."

"What's your firm?"

"Minto & Van Kolken, on John street."

"Never heard of the firm before. Are they good for anything? Can I get a diamond there?"

"You can, certainly, if you pay for it, but my influence wouldn't amount to anything with them."

"No?"

"No; I am in a little trouble with my firm just now. I guess that it is about certain that I shall lose my job."

"That's bad. What's the trouble?"

"Well, I don't mind telling you for you have no real interest in the matter. There has been a big diamond robbery, and although they don't say that they suspect me, I know blame well that they do. I shouldn't wonder a bit if I was arrested."

"Detectives after you?"

"I expected they would be after me. I haven't seen any of them though."

"I'll help you out if there comes trouble. I have taken big fancy to you, Jack."

"You are awfully kind," said Jack, who seemed to be a good deal touched. You could help me out tonight if you would."

"All right, I will. Say if you are mixed up in that diamond business, let me know it. I shan't drop dead."

"Oh, I am not. I assure you I am not. I was to a certain extent, because it was partially my carelessness that caused it to be executed, but I don't hold myself responsible for it and won't."

"He's a right down good fellow," thought Young King Brady. "He knows no more about the business than I do. That's sure."

"I am with you," he said aloud. "Tell me what you want me to do."

"That's just what I can't. I move to tell nobody. We've got to take a big risk tonight. I may be shot at or I may have to shoot. I don't own a revolver and don't know any more about using one than a cat. If I could catch on to a fellow from the west like you, who would just as soon shoot as eat his breakfast, why then ——"

"Say no more. I am your man," replied Harry.

Business was working up in fine style.

"I shall know all about this boy before morning," said Young King Brady. "I wonder what is going to come of all this?"

CHAPTER V.

OLD KING BRADY AND THE DEAD MAN

Old King Brady, although not working directly for the police in these days, has many warm friends on the force.

So great is the respect in which the detective is held that his opinion and judgment is often asked.

On the other hand the whole machinery of the New York police is at the service of the Bradys at any time.

Reining in before the White House in Mulberry street, Old King Brady jumped off the box and ran up the steps.

"Is Costigan here?" he asked of the doorman, adding as he showed his shield, "you know me?"

"Costigan is here all right," replied the doorman, "but just the same, I don't know you."

"Old King Brady."

"Never!"

"But I am he."

"Ah, I know you more by your voice, Mr. Brady."

"Good. Tell Costigan to come to me. I have got a check out in the cab. Perhaps he had better bring a couple of fellows with him to help lift."

"All right," replied the doorman, and he hurried off upstairs.

Old King Brady returned to the cab and opened the door.

Mr. Minto sat bolt upright in the corner.

His head had fallen forward and it now hung down upon his breast.

"That fellow is hard hit for fair," muttered the detective. "Can it be possible that he is dead?"

Strangely enough, the idea had never occurred to him before.

He stepped into the cab and took hold of Mr. Minto's head.

"Dead, sure enough!" he exclaimed. "This makes me feel as small as thirty cents! Who would have ever supposed that such a trick could be played on me?"

Old King Brady continued with his examination.

It was hurried, but it was also thorough.

There could be no doubt that the man was dead.

Here, then, was murder added to this heavy diamond robbery.

Old King Brady had been inclined to suspect Mr. Minto at first.

He did not know what to think now.

Just then Costigan and two other officers appeared.

"What is it, Mr. Brady?" the former asked.

"I thought it was a case of knockout; I begin to think I have a dead man on my hands now," the detective replied.

"Is it so! By gracious, he looks dead!"

"That's what he is, I am very much afraid. Here, boys! Help me get him in."

The officers took hold and Mr. Minto was carried into a small room on the ground floor.

"We want a doctor here," said Costigan.

"You can get one later," replied Old King Brady. "I'm doctor enough to settle the question of whether he is dead or not."

He threw back Mr. Minto's coat, and bending down listened at his heart.

"Well?" asked Costigan as the detective straightened up again.

"Dead."

"You don't say! Where did you get him? Who is he?"

"Name of Minto, diamond dealer on John street. I got him out of a house on Baxter street just below Canal."

"You don't say! Case of murder?"

"It can't be anything else. I thought first he was simply drunk."

"That's one on you, Mr. Brady."

"It is, indeed. Call Dr. Brown. Give me four men. I propose to raid the Baxter street place at once."

To ask was to receive at police headquarters for Old King Brady.

Inside of six minutes the detective, with a plain clothes man on the box beside him, and three policemen crowded inside rattled back to Baxter street in the cab.

They rounded up at Boechie's place, creating an intense excitement in the neighborhood.

The store was now entirely dark, as were the windows above.

"They are all closed up!" cried a frowsy-headed woman, as one of the policemen beat on the door with his night stick.

"The Ginny has sloped!" shouted a young man. "I seen him go."

"When?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Half an hour ago. Just after you was here before."

"In with you, men!" cried the detective, putting his shoulder to the door.

No man can burst a door in better than Old King Brady, and with the united strength of the officers to help him the job was soon done.

They swarmed into the dirty barroom, into the other room on the same floor, and those upstairs.

There was very little furniture in the place, and not a soul to be found anywhere.

The old rookery had been hurriedly vacated, and nothing of value left behind.

Old King Brady locked the door on the crowd before the search began, and now, opening it again, stood at the entrance and called out:

"Is there anyone of you who saw Bocchichi go?"

"I did, mister," several answered.

"You! Come in here!" called the detective, pointing to a bright-looking Italian boy among the crowd.

The lad responded, and Old King Brady locked the door again.

"What's your name?" he demanded.

"Joe Portini," replied the boy without a trace of Italian accent.

"Do you live here on this block?"

"Yes, sir," said the boy, giving the number of his house.

"Do you know this man?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long has he been here in business?"

"About two years."

"Did he do a big business?"

"No, sir. Everybody hated him. He only had a few people who would drink in his place."

"And yet he stayed here two years."

"Yes, sir. He had friends where he used to live. They came here near every night. That is the way he made his money, boss."

"Some came in carriages?"

"Yes, sir. Often."

"Did they often get so drunk that they had to be carried out same as that man I drove here to-night. You saw him, perhaps?"

"Yes, sir, I saw them bring him out. No, I never seen anything like that before."

"And you saw him go, Joe?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was any one with him?"

"No; he was alone. He lives all alone here."

"Then he may come back."

"Don't think so, sir. He had a big bag with him, and was all dressed up in his Sunday clothes."

"Where was the barkeeper?"

"Didn't have any, sir. As I told you he was all alone here in this house."

"All right, Joe. That will do for you," said Old King Brady, giving the boy a dollar. "You may go."

Old King Brady had run up against a mystery in Baxter street.

Little did he imagine when he left John street the strange turn affairs were going to take.

The detective lit a cigar and leaning against the bar remained silently pondering on the problem for fully ten minutes.

The policemen patiently waited for him to come to some decision.

"Boys," said Old King Brady at last, "this house must be kept in the hands of the police until the case can be investigated further. One of you must stay here to-night."

"There should be two, Mr. Brady," replied one of the officers. "This is an awful bad neighborhood, sir."

"All right; make it two, or even more if you wish. I shall return to headquarters now, and I will report."

The policemen talked the matter over, and it was decided which two should remain.

Old King Brady and the others got into the cab and the detective drove back to Mulberry street.

The doctor had been there and made a thorough examination of Mr. Minto's remains.

The inspector was also present now, and it was with him Old King Brady talked.

"What is the decision about the man?" was the question he first asked.

"The doctor calls it a case of morphine poisoning," was the reply.

"Heavy dose?"

"He thinks so. It is hard to tell without a post-mortem."

"That will have to come later. Even then I doubt if they are able to tell. Have you made any move in the matter?"

"None at all. We have been waiting for your return."

"Listen to the story of the case as I understand it, inspector."

"That is just what I want to do," was the reply, and Old King Brady proceeded with his narration.

"Now, then," he said, "I place this murder business in the hands of the police. I cannot possibly attend to it. I shall have to get in some tall hustling if I want to recover the Martigny gems, and there will be no time for anything else."

"We will look after it," said the inspector. "I have already sent out a general alarm for this man Bocchichi. He has the start, but even so I doubt if he can escape."

"He is a slick article, I am afraid. He fooled me, and I am right. I should like to talk with some officer who has had that beat of late."

"You can, right now," replied the inspector. "Officer

allagher has been on that beat. I thought you would
 se to question him, so I telephoned for him to come up.”
 “And he is here now, you say?”
 “Yes; in the next room.”
 “Call him, please.”
 “Tell me what you know about this man Bocchichi, Gal-
 gher,” said Old King Brady, when the officer appeared.
 “If I tell you what I know I’ll tell you nothing, Mr.
 rady. He is the most mysterious man on Baxter street.
 hat’s what he is.”
 “You knew him to speak to him?”
 “Yes, as much as he would ever speak to anyone.”
 “Did he do much business?”
 “Next to none. Everybody hates him. I don’t see how
 lived.”
 “And yet people were coming and going there a good
 al, I am told.”
 “Yes, at times.”
 “Not every day?”
 “Oh, no.”
 “Principally at night?”
 “Yes, principally in the evening.”
 “Do you think he ran a fence?”
 “Something of that sort.”
 “You have no proof?”
 “No; but there were no big lots of goods taken in there
 any time.”
 “Might it not be a coining plant?”
 “It might for all I know.”
 “Then you really can’t tell me much about the man?”
 “Can’t tell you nothing but what I have told you.”
 “The mysterious part is why this man should live
 ere alone doing no business. Is that it?”
 “That’s it.”
 “I see. That’s all, officer.”
 “Gallagher departed.”
 “I’m off,” said Old King Brady to the inspector.
 “Wish you luck, Brady. You have certainly got a tough
 se on your hands.”
 “I know that. It looked simple enough at first.”
 Old King Brady drove the cab around to Reiman’s livery
 able in Pearl street, where he had agreed to leave it.
 Here he consulted a directory, and found that Mr. Van
 olken lived at a private hotel on Fifth Avenue called the
 assau House.
 Here Old King Brady turned up half an hour later.
 He sent up his card, and was shown to an elegant suite
 rooms on the third floor.
 “Mr. Brady! Have you got the diamonds?” demanded
 an Kolken, clutching his hand as he entered.
 “Not yet,” replied the detective. “I’ve got some sad
 ews for you, though.”
 “Great heavens, what now?” cried Van Kolken, throwing
 his hands.
 “Prepare for a great shock,” said the detective.
 “Out with it, man! Out with it! Let me know the
 orst!”

“Your partner Minto is dead!”
 Mr. Van Kolken gave a cry which might have been heard
 across the street and sank senseless at Old King Brady’s
 feet.
 Was he dead?
 Had the firm of Minto & Van Kolken been wiped out
 of existence on the day of the great gem robbery?
 It certainly looked that way.

CHAPTER VI.

IN CHINATOWN.

Young King Brady had certainly made a great success
 of getting in with Jack Welby.
 The question was about this mysterious business in
 which they were now to engage.
 “I can’t tell you a thing about it, Sam,” Jack said. “I
 hope, though, you won’t think that I am crooked, for I
 assure you I am not, but you have a chance to back out now
 if you don’t want to come along.”
 “I certainly shall not back out,” replied Young King
 Brady. “I’m game to go wherever you want to take me
 to-night.”
 “That’s the way I like to hear a fellow talk.”
 “Shall we start now?”
 “It’s a little early. We are comfortable where we are.
 Suppose we stay here until ten o’clock?”
 “All right; and then we go?”
 “Well, I may as well tell you; it’s Chinatown.”
 “So much the better. I’ve heard a lot of New York’s
 Chinatown. It is one of the very places I want to see.”
 They sat and smoked and talked until ten o’clock.
 Jack told Harry a lot about the diamond business, and
 about Messrs. Minto and Van Kolken personally.
 Van Kolken he liked, but he did not like Minto.
 He went all over the story of the lost jewel package, tell-
 ing just what had happened in all its details.
 His story was precisely the same as he had told to the
 detectives in the office.
 Young King Brady felt certain that Jack Welby was en-
 tirely innocent of any part of the steal.
 Ten o’clock came.
 “Time’s up!” said Harry, looking at his watch.
 “Well, we will start,” replied Jack, rising.
 “You look about as cheerful as if you were going to a
 funeral.”
 “I feel so. I’ve got a tough contract on my hands.”
 “I shall stand right behind you.”
 Jack said nothing, and they went downstairs.
 The boy led the way up Park Row to Chatham Square.
 “I think the best way is for you not to speak a word to
 anyone unless you have to,” he said. “This is a private
 matter, and a very ticklish one to handle. Only that I
 have to you wouldn’t catch me in it, you bet.”

"All right," said Young King Brady. "Anything you say goes."

Jack led the way to a notorious saloon on the Bowery.

There were many drinking at the bar, and a lot of loungers in the place.

In the back room there were more women than men.

They were dancing and singing, and the beer was being carried in as the detective and Jack entered the saloon.

"This is a tough place, and that is a tough gang in behind there," Young King Brady whispered to Jack.

"I know it. Don't say a word," was the reply.

They sat down at a table, and Jack called for beer, which he did not drink, but spilled little by little on the floor.

"One would think he was a detective himself," thought Harry. "I can't imagine what his game is."

Just then a dark, handsome young fellow wearing rather a shabby suit of clothes entered the saloon, and came straight to their table and sat down.

Harry took it all in first glance.

Here was no boy, but a girl in disguise.

"Jack, you are not alone," she said as she took a seat at the end of the table. "Who is this?"

"My friend, Mr. Parker," said Jack. "Parker, let me introduce my friend Al Brown."

"Al Brown" shook hands as though he wished Mr. Parker anywhere else.

A remark or two about the weather followed.

Then Jack and "Al Brown" dropped into a foreign language.

Young King Brady, who listened attentively, could not understand one word of it.

He made up his mind that it was either Spanish or Portuguese.

One thing he noticed, and that was that Jack Welby spoke it as good as the disguised girl.

They kept it up for fifteen or twenty minutes.

Then Jack, suddenly turning to Harry, said:

"How many pistols have you?"

"Two," replied Young King Brady.

"So he had, and a third one as well.

"Can you lend Al one?"

"Certainly."

"Don't be afraid to trust me with it. You will get it back again," said Al Brown haughtily.

"That's all right," replied Harry. "I'm not a bit afraid."

He passed one of his revolvers to the girl.

There was more talk in the foreign language.

"I think we had better make a start," said Jack. "Sam, did you ever hit the pipe?"

"Never. I hope you don't."

"No, no! We may have to pretend to to-night, though."

"I guess we can do that."

They left the saloon, and turning out of the Bowery, walked along Pell street.

In a moment they found themselves in the very heart of Chinatown.

Suddenly Al Brown, who took the lead, made a dive through a dirty doorway.

A haggard looking Chinaman stepped out of the shadows and barred the way.

Al Brown immediately got off a lot of gibberish.

"Does he speak Chinese?" whispered Harry.

"Yes; he was born in China. Hush! Not a word!"

"Not here," said Brown in a minute.

"Sure?" asked Harry.

"Yes, we must look further along."

They crossed the street and struck into another place.

"Quong Lee's!" thought Harry, who knew the proprietor well.

Quong himself was on watch at the inside door.

"Well, whatee want?" he demanded, barring the way.

Again there was a long confab in Chinese.

Quong kept shaking his head and saying the same thing over and over again.

"What's to be done?" asked Al at last, turning to Jack.

"I'm satisfied that this is the place, but he won't admit that he has seen him, and he won't let us in to smoke, so that we can find out for ourselves."

"I am sure I don't know," said Jack. "It needs money, and that's what we haven't got."

"How much do you want?" asked Harry.

"Twenty-five."

"Here you are."

"Hold up. I'll strike the Chink first. No use borrowing money unless we actually need it," Al Brown said.

There was another long confab.

It appeared to be to no purpose.

Quong Lee still stood with his back to the door and kept shaking his head.

"No use. Nothing doing," said Al Brown.

"It must be done," said Jack. "I don't know what on earth to do."

"If I knew what you were after, perhaps I could help you," said Harry.

"We are trying to find a certain party who hits the pipe."

"Man or woman?"

Jack and Al glanced meaningfully at each other.

"Man," said Jack.

"Ah! It's a woman if I know anything," thought Young King Brady.

Aloud he said:

"If you will step outside and leave it all to me I think I will get you in."

"Oh, we don't want to go into the regular joint," said Jack hastily. "We want to get a private room and have the man brought to us."

"Very well. I'll see what I can do."

"I don't see what you can do any more than we can do, with Al here, speaking Chinese."

"May I try?"

"Sure. If you think that you can do any good."

"Then step outside and leave him to me."

During this whispered conversation Quong Lee stood staring at them, his face about as expressive as a wooden block.

Jack and Al stepped into the street.

The instant they had departed Young King Brady snatched off his wig and flashed his shield.

"Ha! Young Brady," said Quong Lee.

This was a man who was under the greatest obligations to Old King Brady.

There was no favor which the old detective could ask and not get, which was in the Chinaman's power to grant.

With Harry, of course, it was just the same.

"Yes. Quong, who are those fellows?"

"You no know, Brady?"

"No. They are strangers to me."

"Den, I no know neder."

"What do they want?"

"You know Diamond Dave?"

"I have heard Old King Brady speak of him but I never met him myself. I thought that he was in Europe."

"No. He is in New York. They wantee him."

It began to look as though Jack Welby knew something about the big diamond steal after all.

"Is Diamond Dave in your place, Quong?"

"No. Dey keep says, 'yes he is.' I say no."

"And it is straight?"

"Yes."

"But you know where he is?"

"Yes, Brady. Me no tell."

"You must, Quong."

"No, no!"

"But, Quong, this is my case. I don't want to arrest Diamond Dave. I am only working on that young man."

"Sure, Brady?"

"Yes."

"You go with me. You tell Diamond Dave so?"

"Yes, Quong. Give us a private room and let us bring Dave to them. I want to hear what they say."

"You swear Diamond Dave not in it?"

"I swear that he has nothing to do with my case so far as I know."

As Harry spoke, he slipped a roll of bills into Quong Lee's hand.

It was the \$25 he had offered Jack.

"Alle light, Blady," said Quong. "We gettee Diamond Dave—you and me. Dem two go in room; but Blady?"

"Yes, Quong."

"Dat leetle boy feller what talkee Chinese talk—vat you tink of him?"

"What do you think, Quong?"

The joint keeper tapped his nose and looked wise.

"Him girl, Blady."

"You old rascal! You are too sharp to live," remarked Harry as he adjusted his wig.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Quong, laughing all over.

"Mind now, you don't know me when we come."

"Allee light, Blady. Allee light. 'Member me to the old man."

Harry went out on Pell street.

It was crowded as usual.

A hack drew up at the door and a party of richly dressed slummers descended and entered Quong's.

They were in charge of a ward detective whom Young King Brady knew well.

The man merely glanced at him. It was evident that he had no suspicion who he was.

"Well," said Jack, anxiously.

"It's all fixed," said Harry. "You get your private room and you get your interview with Diamond Dave."

"What?" gasped Al Brown. "Who told —"

"Quong, of course," interrupted Jack. "You are all right, Sam. You are a wonder."

"It cost me the twenty-five. Quong is cranky. Dave is not in his house, it seems, and he insisted that I should go with him and get the fellow, whoever he may be."

"What's the matter with my going?" demanded Jack.

Young King Brady was bound to do it.

The case was becoming interesting.

He was anxious to get in with them as close as he could.

"Oh, he has taken a dislike to you two," he said carelessly.

"And why?"

"On her account."

The disguised girl turned fiery red.

Jack shot an angry look at the detective.

"What do you mean?" he fiercely demanded. "Don't you think that you are making a mistake?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOUSE WITHOUT A DOOR.

Old King Brady is a man of remarkable strength considering his age.

He lifted Mr. Van Kolken bodily and carrying him to a handsome leather covered lounge, there laid him down.

It was only a fainting fit and in a moment Van Kolken revived.

"He sat upon the edge of the lounge and stared at the detective.

"Do you mean to tell me that Minto is dead?" he asked. "Actually dead?"

"He certainly is," replied the detective, sympathetically.

"Thank God!"

Sympathy was thrown away, it seems.

"Yes, yes," said Old King Brady. "you know your business, sir."

"Yes, I know my business. I say 'Thank God,' because I hated that man and some day shall have killed him. How did he die?"

"I think that he was poisoned."

"Poisoned, ha? Who could poison him?"

"Can't say. Did you suspect him of changing the packages, Mr. Van Kolken?"

"Ha! No! Never! It could not be. A man does not rob himself."

"Then why did he go to Baxter street right away after he left the office to meet his death in the house of a notorious crook and fence?"

"Minto in Baxter street? Never! What in the world could take him there? He took a cab to the Grand Central depot. He was going over to Boston tonight."

"He went to Baxter street, however."

"You are sure? How do you know?"

"I drove the cab."

"You drove the cab! What do you mean?"

"What I say. I was satisfied that Minto had changed the packages himself or that he knew who had changed them, so I shadowed him."

"And this place in Baxter street?"

"Was a low saloon kept by one Bocchichi, who has disappeared, and whom I suspect is the murderer of Minto."

"I do not know any such man. Tell me all."

Old King Brady did so.

Van Kolken listened with deep attention.

"I do not believe that Bocchichi did it," he said.

"You suspect someone, I see."

"I do."

"Name him."

"No."

"As you will. I think I can name the man you have in mind."

"Well?"

"Mr. Portinger, alias Count Zucca, alias Diamond Dave."

"What?" cried Van Kolken, springing to his feet.

"Is he not the man that you had in mind?"

"Yes, yes! I admit it, but Mr. Brady, it cannot be possible that Portinger is the same man as Diamond Dave?"

"Let me describe Diamond Dave," said the detective.

He did so.

"It is the man!" cried Van Kolken. "Who can we trust in these days?"

"Your partner was not a man to be trusted if he held the Count Zucca for his friend. He must have known that he was Diamond Dave."

"But, the diamonds. It is their recovery that concerns me most."

"Ah, yes!" said Old King Brady. "Let me ask you was the purchase of the Martingy diamonds for Mr. Huntoon-Brasher your business or Minto's?"

"It was mine."

"And the profit or commission—you were equal partners?"

"Not in all things. When one of us worked up outside business, he got two-thirds profit, the other only one-third. What came into the store was equally divided, on the other hand."

"Yes. Then Minto would have made less than you on this deal?"

"It is so."

"I do not ask you your reasons for hating your partner, Mr. Van Kolken, but I do ask that you immediately overhaul his books and papers and see if you can find any memoranda bearing on this affair."

"It shall be done. You will see me when?"

"I will call at the office in the morning. Now, I shall leave you. Good night."

Old King Brady passed into the street.

He had resumed his usual dress before calling on Mr. Van Kolken, going into a saloon on Sixth avenue, where he was well acquainted, for the purpose.

He then returned to the saloon now, and in a private room, assumed his usual dress.

He took a car down town and proceeded to Baxter street, and knocked on Bocchichi's door.

"Well, what's wanted?" demanded the policeman in charge, suddenly throwing open the door.

The detective made a sign and stepped inside.

"Oh, it is you, is it, Mr. Brady?"

"Yes, Connors. Anything doing?"

"Not a thing, sir."

"There has been no one here?"

"No, no one at all since you left."

"And your partner?"

"He is upstairs, sir. I sent him to lie down on that old bed. He was up all last night; you don't mind."

"No, it's your affair, not mine. I am back again to have another look at this place. Have you done any looking around yourself?"

"None at all. I had no instructions."

"Just so. What about the stock of liquors here?"

"I was looking at that, Mr. Brady," grinned Connors.

"I thought as much. Well, what do you know?"

"The beer is sour, what there is of it, and the whisky all water. Sure, I drank near the full of one of the bottles and look at me now."

"Wouldn't know you had touched a drop. Well, stick to it, Connors, I am going upstairs."

Old King Brady passed up into the old fashioned attic under the sloping roof.

He had been there before, but he had only glanced about the place. He had a particular reason for coming here again now.

Flashing his dark lantern about, Old King Brady found the scuttle and pushed it up.

He closed the dark lantern and stood looking out.

Full tenements were all around him.

In many of the windows lights still burned in spite of the lateness of the hour.

Sandwiched in between the tenements were many queer old frame buildings, relics of the long ago, when rich people lived in Baxter street and some of the best shops in town were on Chatham Square.

"Queer what it was ever built for," muttered Old King Brady. "That's what gets away with me."

There was a short ladder nailed down upon the roof which led from the scuttle to the eaves.

Below the eaves and crowded into a narrow irregular space between Bocchichi's house, a tenement, and another next door on Baxter street, which was built almost to the end of its lot, was a queer, triangular structure of wood, rising almost to the height of the roof upon which Old King Brady now looked.

There is no door on two sides of it and no window on the same two sides," muttered the detective. "I wonder what is on the third side?"

Old King Brady crawled out upon the ladder and descended to the eaves.

Here was another ladder leading down upon the flat roof of the singular little house.

Old King Brady went down upon the roof and measured the space with his feet.

"Why there isn't ten square feet here altogether," he said to himself, "and four of that is taken up by the scuttle. I can't make it out at all. Now for a look at the other side."

He crouched down upon the roof so as to get a look without making himself too prominent an object for anyone who might be looking out of the windows of the adjoining tenements.

"Why no," he muttered, "there is no door at all to the house. What on earth was it ever built for? What can it mean?"

He lay flat on the roof, and leaning over the low coping, looked down on all sides.

"It is just as I said," he continued. "No door, three windows, and all of those on the second story. There is something here which needs investigation. I must look into this house without a door."

He tried the scuttle.

It moved about but he could not raise it.

Old King Brady kept working it this way and that and suddenly it came up in his hands.

"I thought so," he said to himself. "It is only fastened by a blind or catch."

There was a ladder beneath the scuttle.

The detective listened long at the dark opening but could not hear a sound.

"It can't be that anyone lives in this place," he said to himself. "Probably it belongs to the owners of this property. Whatever it could have been built for beats me."

"He crept down the ladder and tried the door at its foot.

It was fast.

Old King Brady was just about to bring his skeleton keys into play when he heard officer Connors' voice calling above.

"Mr. Brady, Mr. Brady! Where are you, sir?"

"The infernal idiot. Does he want to let the whole neighborhood know what I am about?"

There was no way of stopping the clatter, but to bring up the ladder to the roof.

The policeman had poked his head out of the scuttle and was peering about.

"Mr. Brady!" he shouted. "Mr. Brady!"

"Hush! Hush for heaven's sake!" said Old King Brady putting his fingers to his lips. "Get inside there, Connors. I'll come, too."

"Sure there's a chink and panhandler down stairs. They came prowling in with a false key, if you please, and I pounced on them. I have them locked in the closet behind the bar!"

"And I heartily wish that you were locked in the closet with them," thought Old King Brady as he scrambled up the ladder with all speed.

CHAPTER VIII.

YOUNG KING BRADY HARD AT WORK.

"Not a bit of a mistake," said Young King Brady in answer to Jack's angry remark. "Don't mind me, Jack, but of course, anyone can see that our friend here is a girl in man's clothes."

Young King Brady expected an explosion.

None came.

"Al Brown" turned fiery red and covered her face with her hands.

"Oh, it's a shame, Jack," she cried. "I ought never to have done it."

"Hush! You are doing your duty," replied Jack gently.

"Sam," he added, "you do the best you can for us. We want that man, and it seems as if you might be able to get him. You appear to know more about this sort of thing than we do, after all."

"Come," said Young King Brady, "Quong will take us to the room now."

He led the way back through the dark hall, and the old Chinaman showed them into a small room partitioned off from a larger one by rough boards.

There was a table and four chairs there, and three wooden bunks against the wall, with the wooden head rest such as opium fiends use.

"You smokee?" demanded Quong.

"No," said Jack, quietly.

"Al Brown" gave a queer laugh and said something in Chinese.

"Allee light," chuckled Quong and he left the room. A dark shadow passed over Jack's face.

"You didn't do it! Oh, say, you didn't do it?" he exclaimed, seizing the girl's hands.

She laughed harshly.

"Only once, Jack."

"No, no! Not any. You promised."

"Yes, one! Just one. I declare this shall be the last."

"Hop?" said Young King Brady, with a smile. "You are rather young to start in on that sort of game, it seems to me."

"It's none of your business, anyway!" flashed the girl. "You attend to your own affairs."

"Lil!" said Jack, warningly.

"Oh, I just don't care," cried the girl. "I didn't want this fellow along. I will have one pipe if I have to die for it."

Jack seemed to suffer agony.

He drew her off to one corner of the room and they were still whispering together when old Quong returned with an opium layout which he placed on a stool beside one of the bunks.

"Al" threw off her coat, removed her collar and tie, took off her shoes and laid down in the bunk.

"You are bound to smoke then," he said. "We came to find Dave, not to hit the pipe."

"I don't care what you say," was the reply.

Quong placed a playing card with a lump of opium on the stool beside her.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" he chuckled. "One time hittee pipe, always hittee pipe. Ho! Ho! Ho!"

Jack raised his hand as though he would strike him, but Harry caught his arm and held him back.

Quong left the room chuckling and muttering to himself while "Al" Brown proceeded to "cook" the opium pill, rolling it about in the lamp flame in the most scientific way.

Harry saw that in spite of her years, the girl was an accomplished opium fiend.

"Come, don't look so solemn," cried the girl. "I can't help it. I got the smell of the stuff through the partition here and it has started me up again. Never mind, Jack. I'll reform some of these days."

"It's terrible, Lil. You know your promise."

"Oh, to the winds with the promise!" cried the girl, taking a long pull at the pipe.

"Ah! That's good!" she exclaimed. "Forget it, Jack. Best thing that you can do is to come in here and have a pipe with me."

In answer Jack dropped into a chair and buried his face in his hands; with his arms resting on the table he sat so for a long time and never moved.

Meanwhile "Al" was hitting the pipe for all she was worth.

One pill finished, she deftly cooked another, and for a person to prepare an opium pill for himself is not considered easy.

Young King Brady in the meantime leaned back and puffed his cigarette.

He did not know just what to do.

Evidently Jack was deeply in love with this girl.

Harry felt very sorry for him.

"The sooner he shakes her the better," he thought. "I'm afraid I made a mistake in bringing matters to a head so."

All this time "Al" had paid no further attention to Young King Brady.

Now she seemed to get drowsy.

The second pill was smoked, and she laid the pipe down.

"Jack!" she called. "Say, Jack."

There was no answer.

Jack sat still at the table with his face buried in his hands.

"Jack!" she called again. "Jack, come and have a smoke with me. Come on."

Still no answer in words, but Young King Brady could hear the boy sobbing softly.

"Ah, you fool! You're such a softy," said "Al" in a sleepy way. "I like a fellow with some snap to him. Say, you, Sam Parker, you look to be the right sort. You come and have a smoke with me!"

"Not this evening. Some other old time," replied Harry in a careless way.

It was too much for Jack Welby.

He staggered to his feet.

"It is all over between us, Lil," he said. "You are as weak as your sister, and I'm done with you forever."

"No; you don't mean it," replied "Al" with a light laugh.

Then she rattled off a few rapid sentences in Spanish, to which Jack replied.

Young King Brady could not understand, but he realized that this meant the parting of two lovers—a mere boy and girl.

It was sad.

But Harry was out for business.

He was anxious to bring it all to an end and find out what the notorious Diamond Dave had to do with Jack Welby and this girl.

Suddenly Jack started for the door.

"I'm done," he cried. "It's over between us forever, Lil. Come, Parker, if you are any friend of mine, you will go with me."

"I'm your friend right down to the ground," replied Harry, "and I am ready now."

Jack flung open the door, and they passed out into the dark passage.

Lil, or "Al," laughed as they went, and called after them:

"Oh, you'll be back again, all right, Jack."

She was singing in Spanish as Young King Brady closed the door.

He caught Jack's arm and pressed it hard.

"Brace up, old man!" he said. "There are as good fish in the sea as ever were caught. It will come around all right in the end."

"It never can," replied Jack hoarsely. "But say, Sam, it's awful dark here. Are we going right?"

"Oh, I guess so," replied Young King Brady, but he was not quite sure himself.

The passage had several turns—he had noticed that when they came in.

Before entering it they had been obliged to pass through a door alongside of which was another door.

Young King Brady had noticed that, too.

He would have liked to produce his dark lantern, but he did not for fear that Jack would suspect his true character.

Instead he struck a match.

Here were two doors right ahead of them.

This was a surprise, for they had not passed through any door as yet.

"I did not notice this other door when we came in—did, you, Jack?" Harry said.

"No."

"Which is which?"

"Blamed if I know."

"We will try the door on the right hand. I think that must be the one."

The match went out as Young King Brady spoke, but he had his hand on the knob and he threw the door open in the darkness.

"It is as dark as a pocket here," he said, groping his way on. "We must have light on the subject. I don't seem to have another match."

"I have one, if I can find it," replied Jack.

At the same instant there was a sudden rush in the darkness.

"Look out!" cried Young King Brady, reaching for his dark lantern and revolver.

He was too late.

Twice a heavy sandbag descended upon Young King Brady's head, and he dropped to the floor unconscious.

Jack Welby got the same with the same result.

There was silence for a moment.

During that moment Harry half recovered consciousness.

He could hear low voices talking in Chinese.

Then a loud commanding voice spoke in the same mysterious language.

Young King Brady, who was trying to rise, was suddenly seized and raised bodily off the floor.

Foolishly he struggled a little.

Instantly came another blow on the head, and Harry knew no more until he recovered consciousness to find himself lying on a bamboo couch in a brightly lighted room furnished in Chinese style.

His hands were tied together, and each of his legs was tied down to the legs of the couch.

On another couch of the same sort lay Jack Welby in the same fix.

Jack was calling him when Young King Brady regained his senses.

"Sam! Sam!" he shouted. "Wake up! Tell me that you are not dead!"

"Dead! Not a bit of it!" answered Harry. "Somebody knocked me out with a sandbag—that's all. You look as though you had got your dose, too."

"I did, you bet! But it is all my doings, bringing you into this dreadful place. I can't ever blame myself

enough. And all for nothing, too. You understand that I had nothing to do with this attack?"

"Why, of course I do. Haven't you got your dose as well as I?"

"I feel terribly about it, Sam. Where do you suppose we are? I can't remember a thing from the time I was hit until I come to and found myself here."

"I don't know where we are, but I propose to find out. Somebody is going to suffer for this."

Young King Brady was thinking of Quong Lee, but of course Jack did not understand.

"I want to set myself right," said Jack earnestly. "You tried to befriend me and this is the result. I am going to make a full confession of what must seem to you a very mysterious business. I only hope we get out of this alive."

Young King Brady was quite himself again now.

"Go on," he said. "Perhaps you had better tell me in case anything happened. You might escape and I not, or it might go the other way."

"That's it. Sam, I was dead in love with that little dope fiend we left behind us in that room."

"I saw that."

"Yes, it is so. I used to live in the city of Mexico. I met her there. My father was an American, but my mother was a Mexican woman. I speak Spanish better than English. My parents are both dead, and for a year or two when I was a boy I worked for a man who kept a diamond and jewelry shop in the Plaza de Armas. He was called the Count Zucca, and was a great expert in diamonds and also a great crook."

"Ah!" said Young King Brady. "Here in New York he is known as Diamond Dave, the walking fence. He is the man you came here to see tonight."

"It is so. Let me finish and you will understand why."

"This man was good to me. He had money then, and I was nothing but a poor orphan boy whom he picked up in the streets. I lived at his house for a year. His wife was dead and there were two daughters, beautiful girls both. Alice, the oldest, and Lilian, the one you saw tonight."

"The Count was a moderate opium smoker. He had learned the habit in China, where he once lived, and where his daughters were born, and brought up until they were twelve years old. Their mother was partly Chinese and partly French. The girls spoke Chinese and the count did too."

"That was the way I lived in Mexico. I fell in love with Lil, as I told you, and all went happily with me until one day the police came down upon the store and seized all our stock and we had to run for our lives."

"The count was in trouble for dealing in stolen diamonds."

"He had powerful friends on the police force, and they tipped him off in time."

"He fled to Vera Cruz with the girls and succeeded in getting aboard a French steamer."

"Before he left he gave me two hundred dollars and a

letter to Mr. Minto. I came to New York and went to work for Minto & Van Kolken, on John street, and have been with them ever since.

"Everything went well with me until about three months ago. I never heard from Lil or the count, and I was glad of it, for I had learned from friends in Mexico that the man was a professional crook."

"Of the worst kind," put in Young King Brady. "He is known to the police in many places, but it is only recently he turned up in the United States."

"I know. He called at our place the day he arrived. He and Mr. Minto are great friends."

"Do Minto & Van Kolken do a crooked business?"

"Between ourselves, they do, to a certain extent, but they are very careful to receive stolen goods only from those they know."

"Of course the count claimed my acquaintance, and I was invited to his flat up town to see the girls."

"I want to cut it as short as possible, Sam, and so I will just say that I found them as beautiful as ever, but otherwise much changed."

"Alice had become a confirmed opium smoker in China, and her father did not seem to care. She will go away and smoke in the joints and be gone for days together. Lil hit the pipe at times, too, though not so hard."

"My old love for the girl returned. I tried to break her of the dreadful habit and thought I had succeeded. Alice grew worse and worse, and the father was as bad as could be."

"For four days now Alice has been missing, and Lil was dreadfully worried, for her father had been away also. I agreed to meet her to-night, as you saw. She has worn men's clothes before when hunting for her sister, and we have succeeded in finding the girl before now and bringing her home."

"To-night it was to have been the same. I swore I would drag her out of the joint even if at the point of the pistol. When I met Lil she thought we ought to find her father first. Quong Lee admitted that he knew where he was. You tried your hand at making him tell. Well, you know how it worked. The smell of the opium was too much for her. I can't stand it any longer. I am done with her forever. I—I—oh, it is all so dreadful. I wish I had never seen that man again. If I ever escape I'll leave the country and go to some place where they cannot find me. They stand in the way of my success in life, and—and—oh, I can't say any more! I feared trouble in the dens with the Chinese—that's why I asked for your pistols."

"You have told me enough," said Harry kindly. "The very best thing you can do is to shake 'em, I say. When did you see the count last?"

"Only this afternoon. He called at our place on business. He passes under the name of Portinger, and the firm allows him to take out diamonds on memorandum. He hangs about the hotel, gets acquainted with rich young men, teaches them to hit the pipe, and palms off flawed diamonds on them for high prices."

"Why didn't you ask him where Alice was this afternoon?" said Harry.

"I had no chance. He was half dozey, and was busy with Minto all the time, and I was horribly busy myself. It was just then that the big diamond robbery I was telling you about occurred."

"Is that so? Don't you suppose he had something to do with it?"

"Between ourselves I haven't the least doubt of it, and that's why I wanted to see him. I——"

"Well, you do see him!" spoke a voice behind them.

Turning his head as well as he was able, Young King Brady was a tall, handsome man with gray hair and mustache standing at the other end of the room.

"Here I am, boys!" he exclaimed.

"I have been listening to your story, Jack. So you think I am the diamond thief, do you? My dear fellow, I think the same of you."

CHAPTER IX.

OLD KING BRADY EXPLORES THE HOUSE WITHOUT A DOOR.

"Connors, for heaven sake what are you making all that noise about?" demanded Old King Brady when he came down into the garret.

"Do you want to bring all Baxter street down upon us?"

"Sure, Mr. Brady, everyone is abed and asleep. I wanted you right quick, and I seen you going down that scuttle, so I called."

"All right. Don't do it again. About this Chinaman and the panhandler. How came they here?"

"They opened the door with a key. I heard 'em coming and I hid behind the bar and pounced on them. Sure I fanned the Chink with me night stick, and I give the panhandler one which put him out of business first clip."

"Oh, I see. A little unnecessarily rough, were you not?"

"I wanted to make sure of them. They might be the murderers for all I know."

"You have them locked in the closet, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, well. We will see what it is all about. Come on."

Old King Brady hurried downstairs.

They had no sooner entered the saloon than they made a discovery which did not please Connors a bit.

The closet door stood wide open and the street door ajar.

"Well, well!" said Old King Brady, as the policeman broke out in a torrent of picturesque language. "This is the way you do business, it seems."

"Them Chinks ought to be all run out of the country!" stormed the policeman. "Sure they are no good anyhow; always getting an honest man into trouble—that's what they are."

"Who is this?" said Old King Brady, looking out through the half open door.

At the foot of the steps which led up on to Baxter street lay a young man quite unconscious with his face all covered with blood.

There was nothing of the Chinaman to be seen.

The young man was in his shirt sleeves and looked to be pretty badly used up.

He was of slight build and of no weight at all for the detective.

He took him by the collar, and fairly ripping the shirt off his body as he did it, lifted him inside and laid him out on top of the bar.

"Lock the door, Connors," he said. "This time leave the key in the lock, so that no more prowlers can come in."

As Connors hastened to obey Old King Brady drew some water in a basin and washed the face of the unconscious youth, and proceeded to examine his wound.

It was but slight. Connors' night stick was not altogether responsible for the young man's condition.

All at once Connors saw the detective give a start.

"Is he dead, Mr. Brady?" he anxiously exclaimed.

"Dead—no."

"You gave such a jump."

"I've found out something, Connors."

"And what is it, sir?"

"I'll tell you later. This young fellow is in a bad way."

"Drunk, of course."

"Not at all. He has been smoking opium until he is almost dead."

"Sure I thought I smelled something strange about him. Is it the dope?"

"It is nothing else. If something is not done I doubt if he recovers. He has just come out of some joint, whatever brought him here."

"What's to be done, Mr. Brady? Shall I go for a doctor?"

"Doctor nothing. I'm doctor enough for this case. Stand by here. Leave it all to me."

Old King Brady hurried into the back room, which was Bocchichi's kitchen.

Prowling about here for a minute he found some coffee in a paper.

There was the remains of a fire in the old cook stove.

The detective raked it down, put on wood and soon had a good blaze over which he proceeded to make coffee in a tin pot.

The antidote for opium in all its forms is coffee.

Many a life has been sacrificed to an overdose of the deadly drug which might have been saved if this fact was generally known.

Soon Old King Brady had his coffee ready, and with a cup steaming hot he hurried back to the barroom.

"I'll lift him up, Connors. Make him drink this; give it to him slowly," he said.

He shook the unfortunate until it seemed as if his head would drop off his shoulders.

At last the boy opened his eyes.

"Don't! You hurt!" he gasped. "I want to sleep. Leave me alone!"

"Drink a sup of this," said Connors. "Open your mouth now, or I'll chuck it all in your face."

They got the coffee down his throat by degrees.

That Old King Brady saved a life then there is not the slightest doubt.

The young man sitting on the bar, half supported by the detective's strong arm, stared at him.

"You—are—not—my—father," he slowly said.

"Not if I know it," replied Old King Brady.

"Where—am—I?"

"In a barroom in Baxter street."

"Are you Bocchichi? I can't see."

"No. I am a friend of Bocchichi."

"Where is Lung Sing?"

"He is gone. He left you in my charge."

"Gone!"

"Yes."

"Did—did—he—get—the—Martigny—diamonds?"

Old King Brady started.

He had found his clew in Baxter street lying half dead at the foot of Bocchichi's steps.

"Sure he's clean gone wid de dope!" cried Connors.

"Who would ever be looking for diamonds here?"

But Old King Brady said nothing.

The young man had sunk off to sleep again, and his head dropped on the detective's shoulder.

It was the sleep which invariably follows the administration of coffee to an opium subject.

"I shall have to let it run its course," thought the detective.

He took the young man in his arms, and carrying him into the back room, laid him down on an old lounge.

"Don't disturb him, officer," he said. "He will soon be all right. Let him sleep it out. I'll be back soon."

"Are you off, Mr. Brady?"

"To where you found me."

"It's a queer place, sure, that bit of a house in the back yard."

"It is. I want to find out what it amounts to. The strangest part is that there don't seem to be any door."

"Is that so. Who would ever build a house like that?"

"Some one has done it, just the same, and I propose to find out why if I can. Keep a close guard here, Connors. I suppose there is no use in waking that man upstairs."

"Ah, now, let him sleep, Mr. Brady. It will do him good."

Old King Brady thought so too when he looked in on the policeman for a minute.

It was a time when the police force of New York was at its worst, and there was very poor discipline on the force.

Old King Brady saw at a glance that this man had been helping himself to Bocchichi's drinkables, and had evidently struck something which was not all water.

"He will not wake up till morning," the detective said

to himself. "Well, let him sleep it out. I must examine this house without a door."

He climbed to the roof and descended the ladder to the locked door.

By the aid of his skeleton keys Old King Brady readily opened it.

Producing his dark lantern he flashed it around.

He was in a small room furnished in the most luxurious manner after the Oriental fashion.

Soft rugs of immense value covered the floor; there were couches and divans and expensive Turkish hangings.

In one corner was a sort of rack carrying a dozen or more long Turkish pipes.

On the other side of the room stood a mahogany buffet filled with the most expensive wines, liquors, cigars, etc.

In front of each divan and couch was a Turkish stool bearing an opium layout.

Old King Brady lit the large hanging-lamp and stood taking all this in.

"And this is Baxter street!" he muttered. "Now I understand what brings some of Bocchichi's carriage customer's here."

The place was simply an opium joint, gotten up regardless of cost, and in the most luxurious style.

There was no visible staircase here, nor any hallway outside, but the shrewd old detective soon found a secret panel which upon being opened was found to communicate with a narrow flight of stairs.

Old King Brady passed down into another room of the same size as the one above.

This was fitted up as a kitchen.

"Well, well!" he muttered. "Bocchichi takes good care of his dope fiends. That's plain to be seen."

Here was every appliance for getting up fine dishes.

Here was a store of wines and liquors of the choicest brands.

Here was a pantry stocked with everything under the sun. What interested Old King Brady more than all was an ingenious device back of the range by which the smoke was carried down into the sewer.

"A great deal of money has been spent here," thought the detective. "I begin to doubt if Bocchichi has run away."

There was a mate to the secret panel here.

Old King Brady opened it and went down one flight further, which proved to be the last.

Here he found himself in a store-room packed full of all sorts of valuable goods.

There were bales of silk, fine linen, woollen goods, much jewelry of the cheaper sort, clocks and watches, and many other things.

The house without a door was not only a joint but a den.

Instead of doing no business at all Bocchichi evidently did a very extensive one.

Baxter street is full of queer places.

Old King Brady, after a careful examination of the

stock which he sized up as being worth at least \$5,000, thought that he had struck one of the queerest of them all.

"I think Mr. Bocchichi or somebody else will be looking around this way before long," thought the detective, and he started up the secret stairs, locked the door at the foot of the latter, and went on by way of the roof down into the Baxter street barroom again.

"As I expected!" he exclaimed, upon looking around.

The young dope fiend was sound asleep upon the sofa. Officer Connors, on the contrary, had chosen a harder couch for he lay sound asleep upon the barroom floor.

An empty glass and an equally empty absinthe bottle stood on the bar and told the story.

"Ah, ha!" muttered Old King Brady. "Connors has found something to drink that is not all water. He has struck something that will take hold at last!"

The detective gave the guardian of the peace a kick to see how soundly he was sleeping, and got a grunt in return.

"He is fixed," he muttered.

He took him by the collar and dragged him behind the bar, and still nothing was done.

Then Old King Brady went back into the other room and stood looking down upon the dope fiend.

"Handsome! Evidently a Spanish American. Might be a Filipino, though," he said.

Old King Brady was thinking of the discovery he had made when he first examined this young person.

It had been a very important one.

The shrewd old detective knew that it was no wayward youth he was gazing upon.

The dope fiend which lay on the lounge so utterly unconscious was a girl.

CHAPTER X.

YOUNG KING BRADY LEARNS A WHOLE LOT.

The man who stood at the back of the room looking at Young King Brady had undoubtedly been a remarkably handsome fellow in his day before the yellow, pasty look of a professional hop fiend came over his face.

He was stylishly dressed, and his iron-grey hair and mustache together with much expensive jewelry gave him a distinguished air.

He looked the foreign titled gentleman clear through.

Young King Brady, who always made it a part of his business to keep in touch with the pictures in the Rogue's Gallery, recognized the man at a glance.

It was "Count Zucca," alias "David Portinger," alias "Diamond Dave."

His number in the gallery was 8869. The note under his picture read:

"Supposed to have been originally from Manilla. Real name unknown. Speaks a dozen different languages, in-

cluding Chinese. Said to be one of the best judges of diamonds in the world."

"I only hope he doesn't know me as well as I know him," thought Harry, as the count came forward and rattled off a lot of Spanish to Jack.

"I won't speak Spanish!" cried Jack fiercely. "It's no use, Zucca, I just won't. I know you are at the bottom of all this. Anything you have got to say to me you must say in a language that my friend Sam Parker understands."

"So be it," replied the count. "I don't care who hears what I have to say, for you will never leave this place alive. You think you are in Quong's house, but you are very much mistaken. You are in the house where the lodge of Chinese Highbinders hold forth. I am a Highbinder. I joined the order years ago in Tonquin. You have gone just one step too far, Jack Welby. Either you give up the Montigny diamonds or your doom is sealed."

Young King Brady lay still and took it all in.

The man had evidently been hitting the pipe mildly.

He had reached the first or talkative stage of the hop fiend.

The words came with great rapidity.

"I'm going to learn a lot, for he don't suspect me," thought Young King Brady.

And he did.

"I give up the Martigny diamonds!" cried Jack. "You have been hitting the pipe until you're crazy, boss. More likely you are the man who did the steal."

"You little liar! You can't fool me!" cried the count. "Lil is in the next house. She has told me enough. It was part of the programme for her to get you here to-night. Know why? Because I wanted to use you in my business, and I was going to offer you a share in that steal which would have captured you. That dream is over. You are a little sharper than I thought for. Your honesty was all humbug, as I might have known. Ha! Tell me what you've done with the Martigny diamonds before I turn the Highbinders in on you. Speak, boy! Speak!"

"You're crazy, all right," said Jack. "It is just as I always told you it would be. The dope has turned your head at last."

"Enough of that. I won't stand for it. Look here!"

Count Zucca thrust his hand into his coat pocket and pulled out a piece of wrapping paper.

"There's what covered your fake package, Jack Welby!" he cried. "I found the gravel stones inside all right."

Jack's eyes grew big with amazement.

"I swear to you, Zucca. I put up no fake package," he said in a manly way. "I see that you did the job, and somebody has done you. Did it ever occur to you that it might be your friend Minto himself? He is as big a crook as ever stood in two shoes."

"Jack!"

"Ah, I'm telling you, and you know it all right."

"That paper covered the package you gave to Alice at the wagon. In that package was a lot of gravel stones—that's all."

"That I gave to Alice?" cried Jack. "Do you mean to say——"

"Oh, yes, I mean to say it," said Count Zucca, seating himself. "Alice played the expressman. You know both she and Lil are perfect artists in making up in male attire. Well, I'll tell you all about it. I bought that express wagon second hand of a wheelwright, and had Adams' name painted on it. The wagon started from here, and drove straight to John street. You were completely fooled, as we thought, and Alice was laughing at you because you didn't know her, but I guess the shoe belongs on the other foot and you fooled us all right, for when we opened the package here, lo and behold! the gravel stones."

"Yes," said Jack. "Somebody has fooled you, but it wasn't me."

"Own up, boy, own up and divide fair. You shall marry Lil right away and go off by yourself so you can keep her from the pipe if you wish, only give up the goods, for we want to jump the town right now."

"Zucca," said Jack, "as Heaven hears me you are on the wrong track. I have not got the diamonds. I know no more who has them than the dead."

"Well, then, it is death to you," said the count, "for I don't believe a word you say."

"Look here, Zucca," said Jack. "One word, for I would like to get at the bottom of this business. Was Minto in the deal?"

"I'm going to be frank and open with you, boy, same as I have always been," said the count. "Minto thought he was in the deal. We started in to do Van Kolken. The diamonds were to be faked out of the place by changing the packages, and a great row kicked up about it. Detectives were to be called in, and all that sort of thing, and suspicion was to be thrown on you. Then Minto was to meet me at a certain place to-morrow, and we were to divide, and slope for South America. That was the plan. Of course I never intended to meet Minto. He would never have laid eyes on me again."

"Ah, I see," said Jack. "And so would you see if you didn't have the dope in your brain. There were three packages. Minto fooled you. Who did the changing, Zucca?"

"I did, right under your nose."

"I thought as much."

"But Minto would never dare! I know enough of that man's past to send him to State's prison twenty times over."

"Would never dare! He has done it. He has the diamonds and don't you forget it. Zucca, excuse me, but you are a fool!"

Jack's words seemed to have a powerful effect upon the count.

"By jove, boy, you always were as keen as a needle!" he cried. "I begin to believe you are right."

"Of course I'm all right," said Jack. "You can kill me and my friend if it pleases your fancy, Zucca, but that will never bring you the Martigny diamonds. Their value is

fully \$250,000. That is twice as much as Minto had in the business. Most likely he is on his way to Holland now."

Unknown to Jack or anyone in the room the man Minto was on his way to a far more distant place than Holland.

He was travelling to "that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns."

Count Zucca paced the room for a few moments biting the ends of his mustache.

"Jack, swear that you are telling me the truth!" he said fiercely. "I have been good to you in the past. Don't fool me now, boy."

"I swear it, Zucca. All I have said is true."

"Then where is Minto to be found; that is the next question."

"He gave out that he was going over to Boston. He left the office in a cab."

"He may have stopped to hit the pipe," mused the count. "That has delayed many a better man than he."

"Did Minto hit the pipe? I never imagined it."

"Yes; but always at night."

"Did he smoke in the joints?"

"In one joint—a strictly private affair, supported by a few business men who had dealings with—well with such crooks as I am."

"Where is it located?"

"I don't mind telling you now for I shall leave New York to-morrow in any case. Bocchichi's on Baxter street. He has a fake saloon in front; the joint is in a little house in the rear."

"Very likely Minto is taking it easy there at the present moment. If you will set us free, Zucca, we will all go over to Baxter street and see if we can find him. How will that suit?"

"Won't suit at all. You stay here till I am safe out of town at all events," retorted the count, and he immediately left the room.

Young King Brady and Jack could hear him locking the door behind him.

Soon the sound of his retreating footsteps had died away, and all was still.

Young King Brady was the first to break silence.

"Jack, you have had a narrow escape," he said,

"What do you mean? I only wish we had escaped. We seem to be further than ever from it just now."

"You don't understand. If that thing had gone through there is no doubt in my mind that the whole blame would have been turned on you and you would have been caught by some fake detective with one or two of the diamonds on your person. While Van Kolken was working over that fake bit of false evidence Minto and Count Zucca would have escaped."

"By jove!" cried Jack. "I believe you are right!"

"Of course I am, Jack, you saw the detectives in the office this afternoon. Did it never strike you as strange that you were not shadowed after you left John street?"

"Of course it did. I told you that I expected to be."

"Well, you were."

"What do you mean?"

"What I say, and it is a lucky thing for you that you were for now the Bradys know the truth and will be able to put you right before the world."

Jack half raised himself, bound as he was.

"Do you mean to say that you are Young King Brady?" he cried.

"And no one else. The time has come when you should know."

"It beats the band! I would never have believed it. I—hush! Someone coming now."

"Trust me," said Harry. "We shall escape. I feel certain of it. Then we will at once go to this secret joint in Baxter street and see what can be done there."

"By thunder, I've had enough of it," replied Jack. "I—but whoever is coming in here now!"

Someone was fumbling at the door.

The boy listened breathlessly.

In a moment the door was softly opened, and an old Chinaman put his head in.

"Quong Lee!" called Harry. "Come in and set us free, for heaven sake!"

Quong slid through the door and cautiously closed it behind him.

"Whatee do here?" he said in a hurried whisper. "Why come here? Me lookee evlywhere. Me tink you gone away."

"We got the wrong door, and were sandbagged, Quong."

"Ha! So? Dis Highbinder's house. Dis Diamond Dave's work. M'lister—M'lister. What your name? You gettee killed here."

"He knows me now, Quong!" cried Harry. "Remember all you owe to Old King Brady and for heaven sake set us free."

"It is done, Blady!" said Quong, whipping out a knife and cutting Harry's bonds. "You go—but him stay."

"Not on your life!" cried Harry, drawing a knife of his own and cutting the cords which held Jack captive. He goes with me or I don't go, Quong Lee! Beware, old man! Remember, Old King Brady is your friend now. Don't make him your enemy."

"Den go now—now!" cried Quong. "But no go my way. Highbinder kill you if dey see you. Go by roof."

He threw up a window and motioning toward it darted through the door, locked it behind him, and was gone like a flash.

"I'll pay you for that, you grayheaded old Chink!" cried Harry. "It was up to you to look after me better than this!"

"Let's get!" said Jack. "The way is open. Whatever we strike out there it can't be worse than holding on here for the Highbinders to come and do us up."

There was the roof of an extension outside of the window.

It took up nearly the whole of what had originally been the backyard of the old house, and reached within a few feet of another extension in the rear of a house facing on Mott street.

"Wait," said Harry. "Many of these Chinks know me. This will help some."

He snatched off his wig and right before Jack's astonished eyes made one of his lightning changes.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Jack. "I don't see how you do it."

"Someone coming!" cried Harry. "Slide out on the roof, boy."

They were outside in an instant.

"Crouch down. Make no noise," breathed Harry.

He pulled down the window.

Both lay flat on their stomachs upon the gravelled roof, Young King Brady raising his eyes to a level with the glass.

A second later he saw two Chinamen armed with long knives rush into the room.

"The Highbinders!" he breathed. "Count Zucca meant to do us. I think better of Quong! He showed us the way out just in time."

But they had not escaped yet by any means.

Here they were in the middle of the toughest block in all New York with houses packed with Chinese on all sides.

Through one of these houses they must pass to reach the street.

Who could tell but what that house would prove to be a hangout for Highbinders?

To move now might be fatal.

The two Highbinders were running about the room like a couple of bloodhounds on the scent.

Suddenly Young King Brady saw them make a dart for the window.

"Draw your gun, Jack!" he whispered. "Lay over on the other side of the roof and let them come out between us! We have got to fight for our lives!"

CHAPTER XI.

OLD KING BRADY FINDS THE MARTIGNY DIAMONDS.

The two guardians of the peace having both put themselves out of business by too free an indulgence in Bocchichi's firewater, Old King Brady found himself left to deal with the problems of the house without a door and the old rookery in front alone.

And the detective was just as well satisfied.

Fear was something unknown to him.

He had little use for the help of the police except in a case where numbers were necessary.

Old King Brady greatly preferred to put in the remainder of the night here alone.

His clew was with him there upon the lounge.

The disguised girl had spoken of the Martigny diamonds in a way which showed that she knew all about the steal.

What she knew Old King Brady felt that he must know

too. He had fully determined not to leave the house until he did.

"Come, sister! Come! It is time you were waking up now," he exclaimed. "You want to pull yourself together a bit."

He shook her by the shoulder, shook her again and again, but it did not seem to rouse her.

Failing in this he brought another cup of coffee, and raising her up bodily tried to make her drink.

He was partially successful.

The girl took two swallows and then began to choke and cough.

This brought her to her senses.

She sat up and pulling away from the detective who held her, stared around.

"Where am I?" she asked, looking at Old King Brady through half closed eyes.

"She is as wicked as they make them," thought the detective. "I can read it in her face. There is nothing to her, though. The hop has destroyed what little will power she ever had."

"You are right here in Bocchichi's place," he answered.

"Bocchichi! Ah! He is the bad man!"

"I believe you, sister."

"Who are you?"

"I'm going to tell you. I am a detective, and you are just the very person I want to meet."

"A detective!"

The disguised girl gave a quick gasp.

"Yes, miss, a detective. I am working on the case of the Martigny diamonds which were stolen from Van Kolken & Minto's place in John street this afternoon."

The girl sprang to her feet and took a few staggering steps in the direction of the door.

Old King Brady caught her arm with a grip of iron, and threw her back upon the lounge.

"You don't come any such game," he said. "You are going to stop just where you are. Take it easy, sister, or you will land in jail."

"Why do you call me sister?" she panted. "I am a man."

"You are no more a man than I am a woman, my bold queen of the pipe."

"What do you mean by calling me Mister Expressman?" she asked in a dazed fashion, which showed how far her brain was from being clear.

"I mean this," said Old King Brady, reaching over to the table and picking up a blue cap which bore the gilt label "Adams Express."

Here was another clew, and a most important one.

Old King Brady had picked it up at the foot of the steps leading down from the sidewalk on Baxter street to Bocchichi's door.

At the time he had not appreciated the find at its full value, but when the girl spoke of the Martigny diamonds he knew.

She stared at him with every expression of terror in her face.

"Am I arrested?" she asked.

"You are," replied the detective.

"Will I go to prison?"

"Undoubtedly you will."

"I shall die then."

"And why? Thousands live for years behind the bars, many who are innocent, many who are better than you."

"It is not that. They won't let me have the hop there. I shall die without it. I am mad for a smoke now."

A sudden idea occurred to the detective.

It was a thing he did not like to do, but he determined to do it in this case.

The detective was as well posted on the effects of opium as any man living.

He knew that the girl could safely smoke another pipe now that so much time had elapsed, and especially after the coffee she had drank.

If she smoked then it was to the winds with what little will power she still possessed.

With a little persuasion she could be made to talk, and tell all she knew.

"So you want to smoke badly, do you?" he asked.

"I am crazy for it—mad."

"How many pipes have you smoked tonight?"

"I don't know. Four or five, I guess. Where is Lung Sing?"

"You mean the Chinaman who came here with you?"

"Yes."

"He deserted you after you escaped from the closet."

"Ah, I remember that. The policeman was here."

"Yes, and captured you."

"Lung broke out of the closet. We started for the street."

"I found you down with dope at the foot of the stairs."

"You did?"

"Yes."

"I don't care. Give me a chance to hit another pipe, and I will bless you."

"Will you tell me what you did with the package you took away in the fake express wagon if I do?"

"Yes, I will."

"Well?"

"I took it to a man and he opened it. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"She is half mad," thought the detective.

"Why do you laugh?" he asked aloud.

"You don't want the package or what was in it," was the reply.

"No?"

"No. That package was filled with stones."

"Precious stones? Diamonds, rubies, sapphires and the like?"

"No, no! They were fooled. Gravel stones—that was all."

"She is playing it on me," thought Old King Brady and he said aloud:

"Come on, sister. Follow me and you shall have your

smoke if there is opium to be had in the house and I guess that there is."

"Where are you taking me to?" she demanded as the detective seized her arm.

"To as pretty a little joint as ever you saw."

"Ah, I know. The house without a door."

"Yes. You have been there?"

"Never. Only men go there—Bocchichi's friends."

"I thought you were a man," chuckled Old King Brady as he led her upstairs.

"You know better than that now. There is no use trying to play it off on you."

"Probably not. Are you good on the climb?"

"I would climb up to heaven or down into the other place to get a smoke of opium right now."

And climb she did, with Old King Brady's help, up the ladder and down.

In a few minutes they found themselves in the smoking room of the house without a door.

"This is grand!" cried the half crazed girl looking around. "I had often heard of the place, but I did not think that it was fitted up as fine as this."

Old King Brady had lighted the hanging lamp and, as he turned to close the door, which he did not take the trouble to lock, he observed the girl's eyes in wandering about the room, had fixed themselves particularly upon a handsome rosewood cabinet which stood against the wall.

"She knows more than she has told about the place," he said to himself. "Never mind. She will tell the whole business before I get through with her, or I am making a big mistake."

"Where is the opium?" cried Alice, for of course, the disguised girl was no one else than the disguised sister of Jack's friend, Lil, the daughter of the notorious Diamond Dave.

"That is more than I can tell you," replied the detective, "but see, here are half a dozen layouts. There must be some opium here."

There was and he soon found it in one of the drawers of the buffet.

"How much do you take?" asked the detective. "Be careful, now. I don't want you to die on my hands."

"I would rather die than go to prison where I won't get any opium."

"Then listen to me. I can save you if you will only tell me what you know."

"I will think about that after—after I have my smoke," was the reply.

Alice pulled off a piece of the sticky opium and smeared it on the ace of spades which she took from a pack of playing cards that were lying on the buffet.

Then she lit the opium lamp, Old King Brady supplying the match, flung herself down upon the lounge, and proceeded to roll the pill.

The detective reclined on the divan, watching her in silence.

It was no part of his plan to force the girl to talk until

she got ready and had reached the talkative stage of the game.

She deftly threw the pill into the little round brass bowl of the bamboo pipe and drew in the deadly smoke with long, slow whiffs.

"Ah, that is better," she exclaimed, when the pill was consumed.

"Now give me five minutes to sleep and then I will be ready to tell you about the Martigny diamonds. Hold on, though, I'll tell you what; I am as hungry as a bear. I want something to eat. Can't you get it for me?"

"Where would I get it?" demanded Old King Brady to test her knowledge of the place.

"Down stairs. There's lots there."

"Who told you? How do you know? I thought that you had never been here before."

"Nor have I," said Alice. "Bocchichi, the Cape de Verde island Portuguese who runs this place told me."

"You know him well?"

"I know him."

"When did you see him last?"

"Tonight. I had a smoke with him in Lee Toy's joint on Mott street, if you happen to know where that is."

"I know very well. Is Bocchichi there now?"

Alice gave a queer shrug of her shoulders.

"I reckon he is," she said. "I left him paralyzed. Oh, I guess he is there all right."

The talkative stage was upon her and Old King Brady felt that his time had almost come.

Again and again the girl's eyes had wandered toward the cabinet.

"She wants to get at that cabinet and I am going to let her," thought the detective. "The grub excuse is a good one, too."

"Well, I know that there is plenty to eat down stairs and I know how to get there," he said. "I'll go and bring up the best I can find."

He arose and opened the panel door and started down stairs with a good deal of noise.

But he did not close the door tight behind him.

In an instant he had crept back to it again and was peeping through the crack.

Alice was standing in front of the cabinet.

Old King Brady saw her take out a small package done up in brown wrapping paper and sealed with sealing wax.

"The diamonds!" thought the detective, and open went the panel and with one cat-like spring he was at her side and had wrenched the package from her hand.

"Thank you, my dear," he said. "I will take charge of that. Those are the Martigny diamonds, I guess."

Alice screamed and struck at him.

The detective put her back upon the divan with a strong hand.

"Keep quiet, or there will be trouble," he said. "I don't know you. I don't want to know you. I am not warring on women. Make me no trouble and I will let you go free."

She burst into a fit of maudlin tears.

Old King Brady, facing her, and with his back to the door which led out to the ladder, proceeded to open the package upon the table.

It was addressed just as Jack Welby had said.

And there were the famous Martigny gems.

How they glistened and sparkled in the light of the hanging lamp.

Diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires!

None were of extra large size, but there were so many of them and all were so beautiful.

So intent upon them was the detective that for once his usual caution failed him.

He did not hear the faint noise made by the opening of the door behind his back.

Alice, however, heard and saw.

Old King Brady was not so blind but he saw this, and like lightning he wheeled around to find himself face to face with a tall, elderly man with gray hair and moustache.

And Old King Brady knew him at a glance.

"Diamond Dave!" he gasped and his hand went for his revolver.

Too late!

The noble "count" knew the house better than he!

Up went his hand and pressed a button set in the wall.

Instantly a small square of the flooring dropped from beneath the old detective's feet.

And Old King Brady fell with it.

Fell to his waist, and there two vise-like jaws closed upon him, and held him fast, pinning his arms to his sides.

"Oh, oh, oh! Good, father! Good!" cried Alice. "You have got him now; and see, there are the Martigny gems!"

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Young King Brady and Jack, crouching on the roof, waited for the Highbinders to come.

The two Chinamen threw up the window and looked out.

In an instant they spied the boys, and brandishing their long knives, with excited cries they began to climb out.

"Hold on, Chinks!" cried Young King Brady in a low, stern voice.

Up went the two revolvers covering the two Highbinders.

The effect was magical.

Like most of their race, these two Chinamen were terribly scared of the "Melican" gun.

They wilted immediately and tumbled back into the room.

"Follow it up, Jack!" cried Harry, springing through

the window. "Hands up! Drop those knives!" he shouted. "Drop them or you are dead men!"

The knives fell ringing to the floor.

"Keep them covered, Jack," said Harry. "I'll soon put them out of business. Shoot if they make a move."

He threw the knives in a corner, and then knotting together the pieces of cut rope that had been used to tie up himself and Jack, he soon had the two Chinks in the same fix.

Scarcely a word had been spoken through the operation. Young King Brady had no desire to question the Chinamen for they had been sent by Count Zucca.

"We'll slope by the roofs, now Jack," he said. "Come on."

They walked the length of the extension in the rear of the Highbinders house and leaped across the narrow break which separated it from the house beyond.

"Murder! Murder! Murder! Help!"

The cry was heard just as Jack struck the other roof.

It seemed to be from the room directly in front of them.

Behind the windows of the room a light was burning and the boys saw distinctly Count Zucca holding a long knife covered with blood.

It is doubtful if the "count" saw him for his face was not turned fully toward the window.

At the same instant Harry saw him raise his hand and turn out the gas.

Then in the room behind the window all was dark and still.

"Great heavens! Did you see?" gasped Jack. "It was Zucca! The wretch has just murdered somebody. What shall we do?"

Young King Brady did not wait for a reply.

Producing his dark lantern, he boldly threw up the window sash and sprang into the room, closely followed by Jack, who shouted:

"Shoot him, Brady! Shoot him! Show him no mercy, for he will show none to you."

Jack was fearfully excited, but there was no need to be as far as Count Zucca was concerned.

The "count" had vanished.

On the floor lay a dark, swarthy man in a pool of blood.

The blood was issuing from a wound in his side. He had been stabbed over the heart.

"A priest! Getta priest!" he gasped, his eyes rolling wildly.

"It is too late, my poor fellow," said Harry kindly as he knelt beside him. "If you have any message to send to friends—anything to say, tell me."

"You—you! I know you. You Young Brady the detective."

"Yes, yes! And you?"

"My namea Bocchichi. I keepa de joint in Baxter street."

"Yes, yes! Who killed you? Count Zucca?"

"Count nothing. Diamond Dave. Listen! Dis is judg-

ment on me. Tonight I kill a man! I poison him drunk with morphine in my place. In back is a house with no door. Go by fronta house. He name Minto. He diamond man in John street. He vera bad man. He smoka my place. He say tella police I keel him. Dis is judgment. Tella priest. Oh! Oh! Oh! If I could live to kill Zucca, too, I,——"

It was all over.

A stream of blood issued from the mouth of the wretch, choking off further speech.

"Is he dead?" asked Jack, as Harry staggered to his feet.

"That's what he is. You heard what he said?"

"He has murdered Minto in a Baxter street opium joint. The Martigny diamonds are at the bottom of this. Zucca thought he knew. He wouldn't tell, or he did tell and he killed him all the same."

"Something of that sort, undoubtedly. Strange nobody seems to have heard his cry but ourselves."

"What is to be done? Will you alarm the house?"

"No. What have we to do with it all. Tomorrow will be time enough for me to tell the police what I know. Let us get down to Baxter street without an instant's delay and look for this house without a door."

"But Zucca?"

"I do not fear him. Besides, we may find the diamonds."

"I am with you, Brady. I want to see Zucca arrested. I believe the man is opium mad. He should not be left at large."

Harry opened the door and listened in the hall outside. He could not hear a sound.

Looking over the bannisters, he could see the street light shining through the door below.

"Come, Jack," he breathed, "I am off for Baxter street. Something seems to tell me that I am needed there right away."

They glided down the stairs and passed out of the house into Mott street unobserved.

Whatever told Young King Brady that he was needed in Baxter street, told him the truth.

He was needed and badly needed by no less a person than his great tutor.

Old King Brady, caught in the skilfully contrived trap, faced Count Zucca and a young Chinaman whom Alice greeted as Lung Sing.

"You are Old King Brady the detective," cried the count. "I know you and you know me, though it is years since we have met."

"You are right," said Old King Brady. "I had the honor of sending you to Sing Sing prison once for diamond stealing, some years ago."

"Kill him, father. Kill him!" cried Alice. "There are the Martigny gems. Why do you let him live to send you to Sing Sing again?"

"Peace, wretched girl!" retorted the count. "I have a score to settle with you. You met that wretch Bocchichi again tonight. What terrible fascination does that man hold over you since the night you smoked with him in Quong Lee's joint?"

"It is nothing to you!" cried Alice. "If I like him, that is my affair. Anyhow he told me at Quong's that Minto was in his place tonight and left a package in the cabinet. I knew that it must be the Martigny gems, so I came."

"He told you that!" cried Count Zucca. "Well, he will never tell you anything more. He is dead."

"Dead!" screamed Alice. "Well, I don't care. How did he die?"

"He died by this knife," said Count Zucca, drawing a long, keen blade covered with half dried blood. He died the same way that Old King Brady is going to die now."

"No killee! No killee!" shouted the Chinaman. "Old King Blady, him belly big man. Police ketch us here!"

"Beware, Dave," said the detective, calmly. "What he says is true."

"And what I say goes!" cried Diamond Dave flourishing the knife above Old King Brady. "This is your finish, old man."

"No, yours!" echoed a voice behind him.

The door flew back and Young King Brady and Jack Welby with drawn revolvers dashed into the room.

"Kill them! Kill Jack!" screamed Alice.

But her father did not heed her.

That the man was opium mad there could be no doubt.

"Wing him, Harry!" shouted Old King Brady. "Sing Sing waits for him!"

Young King Brady's revolver cocked with a click.

"This, rather than Sing Sing," hissed the count.

He plunged the knife into his heart and fell dead at Young King Brady's feet.

"Good morning, Mr. Van Kolken."

Two gentlemen greeted the John street diamond dealer in his office next day.

They were the Bradys.

"What do you know?" demanded Van Kolken. "I have just come from the undertaker's. Minto is dead all right, but the Martigny gems ——"

"Are here all right," replied Old King Brady laying a sealed package on the counter. "This is one of the swiftest cases on record, Mr. Van Kolken. It was all done in a night."

Such was the fact.

Within twelve hours the Bradys had worked the John street jewel mystery up to a successful finish.

It took a little time to get Old King Brady out of the trap in the house without a door, but Harry at last found

the button in the wall which controlled the movement of those vise-like jaws, and the old detective was freed.

True to his promise, Old King Brady let the girl Alice go free after giving her a severe lecture.

She and her sister received their father's body later on and had it decently buried, but the name of Lil was never mentioned to the police.

Bocchichi's murder was reported by Harry but the police never made much out of it.

It seemed probable to the Bradys that the Baxter street joint-keeper knew nothing of the gems; that Minto brought them there and put them into the cabinet, intending to smoke. Bocchichi poisoned him on account of a mean old grudge.

Mr. Van Kolken was intensely excited over it all and he rewarded the Bradys most liberally.

We have not given this gentleman's true name, and that of his partner is also assumed.

Van Kolken is still in the diamond business and Jack Welby is his partner.

Jack has entirely shaken the Zucca girls. What has become of them he does not know.

This spring the old rookery on Baxter street was pulled down to make room for a modern tenement.

The house without a door went with it.

Old King Brady tried his best to find out by whom and why it was built, but to no avail.

One thing, however, was certain; the strange structure was very old.

It was not until Mrs. Huntoon-Brasher had the Martigny diamonds in her own possession that the newspapers got hold of the story of the doings of The Bradys in Baxter Street.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS' MIDNIGHT CALL; OR, THE MYSTERY OF HARLEM HEIGHTS," which will be the next number (205) of "Secret Service."

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